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RHYMES OF A RED CROSS MAN

BY
J. S. BRYCE

I wish to enjoy a holiday
of my whole life
Just as you see her she
never will she remain in



my memory.

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Rhymes of a Red Cross Man

BY
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"THE SPELL OF THE YUKON," "THE BALLADS
OF A CHEECHAKO," "RHYMES OF
A ROLLING STONE," ETC.

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Annex

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To the Memory of
MY BROTHER,
LIEUTENANT ALBERT SERVICE
CANADIAN INFANTRY
KILLED IN ACTION, FRANCE
August, 1916.

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FOREWORD

FOREWORD

*I've tinkered at my bits of rhymes
In weary, woeful, waiting times;
In doleful hours of battle-din,
Ere yet they brought the wounded in;
Through vigils of the fateful night,
In lousy barns by candle-light;
In dug-outs, sagging and aflood,
On stretchers stiff and bleared with blood;
By ragged grove, by ruined road,
By hearths accurst where Love abode;
By broken altars, blackened shrines
I've tinkered at my bits of rhymes.*

*I've solaced me with scraps of song
The desolated ways along:
Through sickly fields all shrapnel-sown,
And meadows reaped by death alone;
By blazing cross and splintered spire,
By headless Virgin in the mire;
By gardens gashed amid their bloom,
By gutted grave, by shattered tomb;*

FOREWORD

*Beside the dying and the dead
Where rocket green and rocket red,
In trembling pools of poisoning light,
With flowers of flame festoon the night.
Ah me! by what dark ways of wrong
I've cheered my heart with scraps of song.*

*So here's my sheaf of war-won verse,
And some is bad, and some is worse.
And if at times I curse a bit,
You needn't read that part of it;
For through it all like horror runs
The red resentment of the guns.
And you yourself would mutter when
You took the things that once were men,
And sped them through that zone of hate
To where the dripping surgeons wait;
And wonder too if in God's sight
War ever, ever can be right.
Yet may it not be, crime and war
But effort misdirected are?
And if there's good in war and crime
There may be in my bits of rhyme,
My songs from out the slaughter mill:
So take or leave them as you will.*

THE CALL

THE CALL

(France, August first, 1914.)

Far and near, high and clear,
Hark to the call of War!
Over the gorse and the golden dells,
Ringing and swinging of clamorous bells,
Praying and saying of wild farewells:
War! War! War!

High and low, all must go:
Hark to the shout of War!
Leave to the women the harvest yield;
Gird ye, men, for the sinister field;
A sabre instead of a scythe to wield:
War! Red War!

Rich and poor, lord and boor,
Hark to the blast of War!
Tinker and tailor and millionaire,
Actor in triumph and priest in prayer,
Comrades now in the hell out there,
Sweep to the fire of War!

THE CALL

Prince and page, sot and sage,
Hark to the roar of War!
Poet, professor and circus clown,
Chimney-sweeper and fop o' the town,
Into the pot and be melted down:
Into the pot of War!

Women all, hear the call,
The pitiless call of War!
Look your last on your dearest ones,
Brothers and husbands, fathers, sons:
Swift they go to the ravenous guns,
The gluttonous guns of War.

Everywhere thrill the air
The maniac bells of War.
There will be little of sleeping to-night;
There will be wailing and weeping to-night;
Death's red sickle is reaping to-night:
War! War! War!

THE FOOL

“But it isn’t playing the game,” he said,
And he slammed his books away;
“The Latin and Greek I’ve got in my head
Will do for a duller day.”
“Rubbish!” I cried; “The bugle’s call
Isn’t for lads from school.”
D’ye think he’d listen? Oh not at all:
So I called him a fool, a fool.

Now there’s his dog by his empty bed,
And the flute he used to play,
And his favourite bat . . . but Dick he’s
 dead,
Somewhere in France, they say:
Dick with his rapture of song and sun,
Dick of the yellow hair,
Dicky whose life had but begun,
Carrion-cold out there.

Look at his prizes all in a row:
Surely a hint of fame.

THE FOOL

Now he's finished with, nothing to show:
Doesn't it seem a shame?
Look from the window! All you see
Was to be his one day:
Forest and furrow, lawn and lea,
And he goes and chucks it away.

Chucks it away to die in the dark:
Somebody saw him fall,
Part of him mud, part of him blood,
The rest of him — not at all.
And yet I'll bet he was never afraid,
And he went as the best of 'em go;
For his hand was clenched on his broken
blade,
And his face was turned to the foe.

And I called him a fool . . . Oh, blind was
I!

And the cup of my grief's abrim.
Will Glory o' England ever die
So long as we've lads like him?
So long as we've fond and fearless fools,
Who, spurning fortune and fame,

THE FOOL

Turn out with the rallying cry of their
schools,
Just bent on playing the game.

A fool! Ah no! He was more than wise.
His was the proudest part.
He died with the glory of faith in his eyes,
And the glory of love in his heart.
And though there's never a grave to tell,
Nor a cross to mark his fall,
Thank God! we know that he "batted well"
In the last great Game of all.

THE VOLUNTEER

Sez I: My Country calls? Well, let it call.
I grins perlately and declines wiv thanks.
Go, let 'em plaster every blighted wall,
'Ere's *one* they don't stampede into the ranks.
Them politicians with their greasy ways;
Them empire-grabbers — fight for 'em? No
fear!

I've seen this mess a-comin' from the days
Of Algyserious and Aggydear:
I've felt me passion rise and swell,
But . . . wot the 'ell, Bill? Wot the 'ell?

Sez I: My Country? Mine? I likes their
cheek.

Me mud-bespattered by the cars they drive,
Wot makes my measly thirty bob a week,
And sweats red blood to keep meself alive!
Fight for the right to slave that they may
spend,

Them in their mansions, me 'ere in my slum?
No, let 'em fight wot's something to defend:

THE VOLUNTEER

But me, I've nothin',—let the Kaiser come.
And so I cusses 'ard and well,
But . . . wot the 'ell, Bill? Wot the 'ell?

Sez I: If they would do the decent thing,
And shield the missis and the little 'uns,
Why, even *I* might shout "God save the
King,"

And face the chances of them 'ungry guns.
But we've got three, another on the way;
It's that wot makes me snarl and set me
jor:

The wife and nippers, wot of 'em I say,
If I gets knocked out in this blasted war?
Gets proper busted by a shell,
But . . . wot the 'ell, Bill? Wot the 'ell?

Ay, wot the 'ell's the use of all this talk?
To-day some boys in blue was passin' me,
And some of 'em they 'ad no legs to walk,
And some of 'em they 'ad no eyes to see.
And—well, I couldn't look 'em in the
face;

And so I'm goin', goin' to declare

THE VOLUNTEER

I'm under forty-one and take me place
To face the music with the bunch out there.

A fool, you say! Maybe you're right.
I'll 'ave no peace unless I fight.
I've ceased to think; I only know
I've gotta go, Bill, gotta go.

THE CONVALESCENT

. . . So I walked among the willows very
quietly all night;
There was no moon at all, at all; no timid
star alight;
There was no light at all, at all; I wint from
tree to tree,
And I called him as his mother called, but
he nivver answered me.

Oh I called him all the night-time, as I
walked the wood alone;
And I listened and I listened, but I nivver
heard a moan;
Then I found him at the dawnin', when the
sorry sky was red:
I was lookin' for the livin', but I only found
the dead.
Sure I knew that it was Shamus by the silver
cross he wore;

THE CONVALESCENT

But the bugles they were callin', and I heard
the cannon roar.

Oh I had no time to tarry, so I said a little
prayer,

And I clasped his hands together, and I left
him lyin' there.

Now the birds are singin', singin', and I'm
home in Donegal,

And it's Springtime, and I'm thinkin' that
I only dreamed it all;

I dreamed about that evil wood, all crowded
with its dead,

Where I knelt beside me brother when the
battle-dawn was red.

Where I prayed beside me brother ere I wint
to fight anew:

Such dreams as these are evil dreams; I can't
believe it's true.

Where all is love and laughter, sure it's hard
to think of loss. . . .

But mother's sayin' nothin', and she clasps —
a silver cross.

THE MAN FROM ATHA- BASKA

Oh the wife she tried to tell me that 'twas
nothing but the thrumming
Of a wood-pecker a-rapping on the hollow
of a tree;
And she thought that I was fooling when
I said it was the drumming
Of the mustering of legions, and 'twas calling
unto me;
'Twas calling me to pull my freight and hop
across the sea.

And a-mending of my fish-nets sure I started
up in wonder,
For I heard a savage roaring and 'twas com-
ing from afar;
Oh the wife she tried to tell me that 'twas
only summer thunder,

THE MAN FROM ATHABASKA

And she laughed a bit sarcastic when I told
her it was War;
'Twas the chariots of battle where the mighty
armies are.

Then down the lake came Half-breed Tom
with russet sail a-flying,
And the word he said was "War" again,
so what was I to do?
Oh the dogs they took to howling, and the
missis took to crying,
As I flung my silver foxes in the little birch
canoe:
Yes, the old girl stood a-blubbing till an is-
land hid the view.

Says the factor: "Mike, you're crazy!
They have soldier men a-plenty.
You're as grizzled as a badger, and you're
sixty year or so."
"But I haven't missed a scrap," says I, "since
I was one and twenty.
And shall I miss the biggest? You can bet
your whiskers — no!"

THE MAN FROM ATHABASKA

So I sold my furs and started . . . and that's
eighteen months ago.

For I joined the Foreign Legion, and they
put me for a starter
In the trenches of the Argonne with the
Boche a step away;
And the partner on my right hand was an
apache from Montmartre;
On my left there was a millionaire from
Pittsburg, U. S. A.
(Poor fellow! They collected him in bits the
other day.)

But I'm sprier than a chipmunk, save a touch
of the lumbago;
And they calls me Old Methoosalah, and
blagues me all the day.
I'm their exhibition sniper, and they work
me like a Dago,
And laugh to see me plug a Boche a half a
mile away.
Oh I hold the highest record in the regiment,
they say.

THE MAN FROM ATHABASKA

And at night they gather round me, and I
tell them of my roaming
In the Country of the Crepuscule beside the
Frozen Sea ;
Where the musk-ox runs unchallenged, and
the cariboo goes homing,
And they sit like little children, just as quiet
as can be :
Men of every crime and colour, how they
harken unto me !

And I tell them of the Furland, of the tump-
line and the paddle,
Of secret rivers loitering, that no one will
explore ;
And I tell them of the ranges, of the pack-
strap and the saddle,
And they fill their pipes in silence, and their
eyes beseech for more ;
While above the star-shells fizzle and the
high explosives roar.

THE MAN FROM ATHABASKA

And I tell of lakes fish-haunted, where the
big bull moose are calling,
And forests still as sepulchres with never
trail or track;
And valleys packed with purple gloom, and
mountain peaks appalling,
And I tell them of my cabin on the shore at
Fond du Lac;
And I find myself a-thinking: Sure I wish
that I was back.

So I brag of bear and beaver while the bat-
teries are roaring,
And the fellows on the firing steps are blaz-
ing at the foe;
And I yarn of fur and feather when the
marmites are a-soaring,
And they listen to my stories, seven *poilus* in
a row,
Seven lean and lousy *poilus* with their cig-
arettes aglow.

THE MAN FROM ATHABASKA

And I tell them when it's over how I'll hike
for Athabaska ;
And those seven greasy *poilus* they are crazy
to go too.
And I'll give the wife the "pickle-tub" I
promised, and I'll ask her
The price of mink and marten, and the run
of cariboo,
And I'll get my traps in order, and I'll start
to work anew.

For I've had my fill of fighting, and I've seen
a nation scattered,
And an army swung to slaughter, and a river
red with gore,
And a city all a-smoulder, and . . . as if it
really mattered,
For the lake is yonder dreaming, and my
cabin's on the shore ;
And the dogs are leaping madly, and the wife
is singing gladly,
And I'll rest in Athabaska, and I'll leave it
nevermore.

THE RED RETREAT

*Tramp, tramp, the grim road, the road from
Mons to Wipers*

*(I've 'ammered out this ditty with me bruised
and bleedin' feet);*

*Tramp, tramp, the dim road — we didn't 'ave
no pipers,*

*And bellies that was 'oller was the drums we
'ad to beat.*

*Tramp, tramp, the bad road, the bits o' kid-
dies cryin' there,*

*The fell birds a-flyin' there, the 'ouses all
aflame;*

*Tramp, tramp, the sad road, the pals I left
a-lyin' there,*

*Red there, and dead there. . . . Oh blimy,
it's a shame!*

*A-singin' "'Oo's Yer Lady Friend?" we
started out from 'Arver,*

*A-singin' till our froats was dry — we didn't
care a 'ang;*

THE RED RETREAT

The Frenchies 'ow they lined the way, and
slung us their palaver,
And all we knowed to arnser was the one
word "vang";
They gave us booze and caporal, and cheered
for us like crazy,
And all the pretty gels was out to kiss us as
we passed;
And 'ow they all went dotty when we 'owled
the Marcelaisey! .
Oh, Gawd! Them was the 'appy days, the
days too good to last.

We started out for God Knows Where, we
started out a-roarin';
We 'ollered: "'Ere We Are Again," and
'struth! but we was dry.
The dust was gummin' up our ears, and 'ow
the sweat was pourin';
The road was long, the sun was like a brazier
in the sky,
We wondered where the 'Uns was — we
wasn't long a-wonderin',
For down a scruff of 'ill-side they rushes
like a flood;

THE RED RETREAT

Then oh! 'twas music 'eavenly, our batteries
a-thunderin',
And arms and legs went soarin' in the foun-
tain of their blood.

For on they came like bee-swarms, a-hochin'
and a-singin';

We pumped the bullets into 'em, we couldn't
miss a shot.

But though we mowed 'em down like grass,
like grass was they a-springin',

And all our 'ands was blistered, for our rifles
was so 'ot.

We roared with battle-fury, and we lammed
the stuffin' out of 'em,

And then we fixed our bay'nts and we
spitted 'em like meat.

You should 'ave 'eard the beggars squeal:
you should 'ave seen the rout of 'em,

And 'ow we cussed and wondered when the
word came: Retreat!

Retreat! That was the 'ell of it. It fair
upset our 'abits,

A-runnin' from them blighters over 'alf the
roads of France;

THE RED RETREAT

A-scurryin' before 'em like a lot of blurry
rabbits,
And knowin' we could smash 'em if we just
'ad 'alf a chance.
Retreat! That was the bitter bit, a-limpin'
and a-blunderin';
All day and night a-hoofin' it and sleepin' on
our feet;
A-fightin' rear guard actions for a bit of rest,
and wonderin'
If sugar beets or mangels was the 'olesomest
to eat.

Ho yus, there isn't many left that started
out so cheerily;
There was no bands a-playin' and we 'ad no
autmobeels.
Our tummies they was 'oller, and our 'eads
was 'angin' wearily,
And if we stopped to light a fag the 'Uns
was on our 'eels.
That rotten road! I can't forget the kids
and mothers flyin' there,

THE RED RETREAT

The bits of barns a-blazin' and the 'orrid
sights I sor;
The stiffs that lined the wayside, me own
pals a-lyin' there,
Their faces covered over wiv a little 'eap of
stror.

*Tramp, tramp, the red road, the wicked bul-
lets 'ummin'*

*(I've panted out this ditty with me 'ot 'ard
breath).*

*Tramp, tramp, the dread road, the Boches
all a-comin',*

*The lootin' and the shootin' and the shrieks
o' death.*

*Tramp, tramp, the fell road, the mad 'orde
pursuin' there,*

*And 'ow we 'urled it back again, them grim,
grey waves;*

*Tramp, tramp, the 'ell road, the 'orror and the
ruin there,*

*The graves of me mateys there, the grim,
sour graves.*

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

“Hae ye heard whit ma auld mither’s postit
tae me?

It fair maks me hamesick,” says Private Mc-
Phee.

“And whit did she send ye?” says Private
McPhun,

As he cockit his rifle and bleezed at a Hun.

“A haggis! A HAGGIS!” says Private Mc-
Phee;

“The brawest big haggis I ever did see.
And think! it’s the morn when fond mem-
ory turns

Tae haggis and whuskey — the Birthday o’
Burns.

We maun find a dram; then we’ll ca’ in the
rest

O’ the lads, and we’ll hae a Burns Nicht wi’
the best.”

“Be ready at sundoon,” snapped Sergeant
McCole;

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

“ I want you two men for the List’nin’ Patrol.”

Then Private McPhee looked at Private McPhun :

“ I’m thinkin’, ma lad, we’re confoundedly done.”

Then Private McPhun looked at Private McPhee ;

“ I’m thinkin’, auld chap, it’s a’ aff wi’ oor spree.”

But up spoke their crony, wee Wullie McNair :

“ Jist lea’ yer braw haggis for me tae prepare ;

And as for the dram, if I search the camp roun’,

We maun hae a drappie tae jist haud it doon.
Sae rin, lads, and think, though the nicht it be black,

O’ the haggis that’s waitin’ ye when ye get back.”

My! but it wis waesome on Naebuddy’s Land,

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

And the deid they were rottin' on every hand.
And the rockets like corpse candles hauntit
the sky,

And the winds o' destruction went shudderin'
by.

There wis skelpin' o' bullets and skirlin' o'
shells,

And breengin' o' bombs and a thoosand death-
knells;

But cooryin' doon in a Jack Johnson hole
Little fashed the twa men o' the List'nin' Pa-
trol.

For sweeter than honey and bricht as a gem
Wis the thocht o' the haggis that waitit for
them.

Yet alas! in oor moments o' sunniest cheer
Calamity's aften maist cruelly near.

And while the twa talked o' their puddin' di-
vine

The Boches below them were howkin' a mine.
And while the twa cracked o' the feast they
would hae,

The fuse it wis burnin' and burnin' away.

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

Then sudden a roar like the thunner o' doom,
A hell-leap o' flame . . . then the wheesht o'
the tomb.

"Haw, Jock! Are ye hurtit?" says Private McPhun.

"Ay, Geordie, they've got me; I'm fearin' I'm done.

It's ma leg; I'm jist thinkin' it's aff at the knee;

Ye'd best gang and leave me," says Private McPhee.

"Oh leave ye I wunna," says Private McPhun;

"And leave ye I canna, for though I micht run,

It's no faur I wud gang, it's no muckle I'd see;

I'm blindit, and that's whit's the maitter wi' me."

Then Private McPhee sadly shakit his heid:

"If we bide here for lang, we'll be bidin' for deid.

And yet, Geordie lad, I could gang weel content

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

If I'd tasted that haggis ma auld mither
sent."

"That's droll," says McPhun; "ye've jist
speakit ma mind.

Oh I ken it's a terrible thing tae be blind;
And yet it's no that that embitters ma lot —
It's missin' that braw muckle haggis ye've
got."

For a while they were silent; then up once
again

Spoke Private McPhee, though he whussilt
wi' pain:

"And why should we miss it? Between you
and me

We've legs for tae run, and we've eyes for
tae see.

You lend me your shanks and I'll lend you
ma sicht,

And we'll baith hae a kyte-fu' o' haggis the
nicht."

Oh, the sky it wis dourlike and dreepin' a
wee,

When Private McPhun gruppit Private Mc-
Phee.

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

Oh the glaur it wis fylin' and crieshin' the
grun!

When Private McPhee guidit Private Mc-
Phun.

"Keep clear o' them corpses — they're may-
be no deid!

Haud on! There's a big muckle crater
aheid.

Look oot! There's a sap; we'll be haein' a
coup.

A staur-shell! For Godsake! Doun, lad,
on yer daup.

Bear aff tae yer richt. . . . Aw yer jist daein'
fine:

Before the nicht's feenished on haggis we'll
dine."

There wis death and destruction on every
hand;

There wis havoc and horror on Naebuddy's
Land.

And the shells bickered doun wi' a crump and
a glare,

And the hameless wee bullets were dingin'
the air.

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

Yet on they went staggerin', cooryin' down
When the stutter and cluck o' a Maxim crept
roun'.

And the legs o' McPhun they were sturdy
and stoot,

And McPhee on his back kept a bonnie look-
oot.

"On, on, ma brave lad! We're no faur frae
the goal;

I can hear the braw sweerin' o' Sergeant Mc-
Cole."

But strength has its leemit, and Private
McPhun,

Wi' a sob and a curse fell his length on the
grun'.

Then Private McPhee shoutit doon in his
ear:

"Jist think o' the haggis! I smell it from
here.

It's gushin' wi' juice, it's embaumin' the air;
It's steamin' fer us, and we're — jist — aboot
— there."

Then Private McPhun answers: "Dommit,
auld chap!

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

For the sake o' that haggis I'll gang till I
drap."

And he gets on his feet wi' a heave and a
strain,

And onward he staggers in passion and pain.
And the flare and the glare and the fury in-
crease,

Till you'd think they'd jist taken a' hell on a
lease.

And on they go reelin' in peetifu' plight,
And someone is shoutin' away on their right;
And someone is runnin', and noo they can
hear

A sound like a prayer and a sound like a
cheer;

And swift through the crash and the flash
and the din,

The lads o' the Hielands are bringin' them in.
"They're baith sairly woundit, but is it no
droll

Hoo they rave about haggis?" says Sergeant
McCole.

When hirplin alang comes wee Wullie Mc-
Nair,

THE HAGGIS OF PRIVATE MCPHEE

And they a' wonnert why he wis greetin' sae
sair.

And he says: " I'd jist liftit it oot o' the pet,
And there it lay steamin' and savoury hot;
When sudden I dooked at the fleech o' a shell,
And it — *drapped on the haggis and dinged*
it tae hell."

And oh but the lads were fair taken aback;
Then sudden the order wis passed tae attack,
And up from the trenches like lions they
leapt,

And on through the nicht like a torrent they
swept.

On, on, wi' their bayonets thirstin' before!
On, on tae the foe wi' a rush and a roar!
And wild to the welkin their battle-cry rang,
And doon on the Boches like tigers they
sprang:

And there wisna' a man but had death in his
ee,

For he thocht o' the haggis o' Private Mc-
Phee.

THE LARK

From wrath-red dawn to wrath-red dawn,
The guns have brayed without abate;
And now the sick sun looks upon
The bleared, blood-boltered fields of hate
As if it loathed to rise again.
How strange the hush! Yet sudden, hark!
From yon down-trodden gold of grain,
The leaping rapture of a lark.

A fusillade of melody,
That sprays us from yon trench of sky;
A new amazing enemy
We cannot silence though we try;
A battery on radiant wings,
That from yon gap of golden fleece
Hurls at us hopes of such strange things
As joy and home and love and peace.

Pure heart of song! do you not know
That we are making earth a hell?

THE LARK

Or is it that you try to show
Life still is joy and all is well?
Brave little wings! Ah, not in vain
You beat into that bit of blue:
Lo! we who pant in war's red rain
Lift shining eyes, see Heaven too.

THE ODYSSEY OF 'ERBERT 'IGGINS

Me and Ed and a stretcher
Out on the nootral ground.
(If there's one dead corpse, I'll betcher
There's a 'undred smellin' around.)
Me and Eddie O'Brian,
Both of the R.A.M.C.
"It's a 'ell of a night
For a soul to take flight,"
As Eddie remarks to me.
Me and Ed crawlin' 'omeward,
Thinkin' our job is done,
When sudden and clear,
Wot do we 'ear:
'Owl of a wounded 'Un.

"Got to take 'im," snaps Eddy;
"Got to take all we can.
'E may be a Germ

THE ODYSSEY OF 'ERBERT 'IGGINS

Wiv the 'cart of a worm,
But, blarst 'im! ain't 'e a man?"
So 'e sloshes out fixin' a dressin'
('E'd always a medical knack),
When that wounded 'Un
'E rolls to 'is gun,
And 'e plugs me pal in the back.

Now what would you do, I arst you?
There was me slaughtered mate.
There was that 'Un
(I'd collered 'is gun),
A-snarlin' 'is 'ymn of 'ate.
Wot did I do? 'Ere, whisper . . .
'E'd a shiny bald top to 'is 'ead,
But when I got through,
Between me and you,
It was 'orrid and jaggy and red.

" 'Ang on like a limpet, Eddy.
Thank Gord! you ain't dead after all."
It's slow and it's sure and it's steady
(Which is 'ard, for 'e's big and I'm small).
The rockets are shootin' and shinin',

THE ODYSSEY OF 'ERBERT 'IGGINS

It's rainin' a perishin' flood,
The bullets are buzzin' and whinin',
And I'm up to me stern in the mud.
There's all kinds of 'owlin' and 'ootin';
It's black as a bucket of tar;
Oh I'm doin' my bit,
But I'm 'avin a fit,
And I wish I was 'ome wiv Mar.

“Stick on like a plaster, Eddy.
Old sport, you're a-slackin' your grip.”
Gord! But I'm crocky already;
My feet, 'ow they slither and slip!
There goes the biff of a bullet.
The Boches have got us for fair.
Another one — *Whut!*
The son of a slut!
'E managed to miss by a 'air.
'Ow! Wot was it jabbed at me shoulder?
Gave it a dooce of a wrench.
Is it Eddy or me
Wot's a-bleedin' so free?
Crust! but it's long to the trench.
I ain't just as strong as a Sandow,

THE ODYSSEY OF 'ERBERT 'IGGINS

And Ed ain't a flapper by far;
I'm blamed if I understand 'ow
We've managed to get where we are.
But 'ere's for a bit of a breather.
"Steady there, Ed, 'arf a mo'.
Old pal, it's 'all right;
It's a 'ell of a fight,
But are we down-'earted? No-o-o."

Now war is a funny thing, ain't it?
It's the runmiest sort of a go.
For when it's most real,
It's then that you feel
You're a-watchin' a cinema show.
'Ere's me wot's a barber's assistant.
Hey presto! It's somewheres in France,
And I'm 'ere in a pit
Where a coal-box 'as 'it,
And it's all like a giddy romance.
The ruddy quick-firers are spittin',
The 'eavies are bellowin' 'ate,
And 'ere I am cashooly sittin',
And 'oldin' the 'ead of me mate.
Them gharstly green star-shells is beamin'

THE ODYSSEY OF 'ERBERT 'IGGINS

'Ot shrapnel is poppin' like rain,
And I'm sayin': " Bert 'Iggins, you're
dreamin',
And you'll wake up in 'Ampstead again.
You'll wake up and 'ear yourself sayin':
' Would you like, sir, to 'ave a shampoo? '
'Stead of sheddin' yer blood
In the rain and the mud,
Which is some'ow the right thing to do;
Which is some'ow yer 'eary-eyed docty,
Wot you're doin' the best wot you can,
For 'Ampstead and 'ome and beauty,
And you've been and you've slaughtered a
man.
A feller wot punctured your partner;
Oh, you 'ammered 'im 'ard on the 'ead,
And you still see 'is eyes
Starin' bang at the skies,
And you ain't even sorry 'e's dead.
But you wish you was back in your diggin's
Asleep on your mouldy old stor.
Oh, you're doin' yer bit, 'Erbert 'Iggins,
But you ain't just enjoyin' the war."

THE ODYSSEY OF 'ERBERT 'IGGINS

'Ang on like a hooctopus, Eddy.
It's us for the bomb-belt again.
Except for the shrap
Which 'as 'it me a tap,
I'm feelin' as right as the rain.
It's my silly old feet wot are slippin',
It's as dark as a 'ogs'ead o' sin,
But don't be oneasy, my pippin,
I'm goin' to pilot you in.
It's my silly old 'ead wot is reelin'.
The bullets is buzzin' like bees.
Me shoulder's red-'ot,
And I'm bleedin' a lot,
And me legs is on'inged at the knees.
But we're staggerin' nearer and nearer.
Just stick it, old sport, play the game.
I make 'em out clearer and clearer,
Our trenches a-snappin' with flame.
Oh, we're stumblin' closer and closer.
'Ang on there, lad! Just one more try.
Did you say: Put you down? Damn it, no,
sir!
I'll carry you in if I die.
By cracky! old feller, they've seen us.
They're sendin' out stretchers for two.

THE ODYSSEY OF 'ERBERT 'IGGINS

Let's give 'em the hoorah between us
('Anged lucky we arn't booked through).
My flipper is mashed to a jelly.
A bullet 'as tickled your spleen.
We've shed lots of gore
And we're leakin' some more,
But — wot a hoccasion it's been?
Ho! 'Ere comes the rescuin' party.
They're crawlin' out cautious and slow.
Come! Buck up and greet 'em, my 'earty,
Shoulder to shoulder, so.
They mustn't think we was down-'earted.
Old pal, we was never down-'earted.
If they arsts us if we was down-'earted
We'll 'owl in their fyces: ' No-o-o.' ”

A SONG OF WINTER
WEATHER

It isn't the foe that we fear ;
It isn't the bullets that whine ;
It isn't the business career
Of a shell, or the bust of a mine ;
It isn't the snipers who seek
To nip our young hopes in the bud :
No, it isn't the guns,
And it isn't the Huns —
It's the *mud*,
 mud,
 mud.

It isn't the *mêlée* we mind.
That often is rather good fun.
It isn't the shrapnel we find
Obtrusive when rained by the ton ;
It isn't the bounce of the bombs
That gives us a positive pain :
It's the strafing we get
When the weather is wet,—

A SONG OF WINTER WEATHER

It's the *rain*,
 rain,
 rain.

It isn't because we lack grit
We shrink from the horrors of war.
We don't mind the battle a bit;
In fact that is what we are for;
It isn't the rum-jars and things
Make us wish we were back in the fold:
It's the fingers that freeze
In the boreal breeze —
It's the *cold*,
 cold,
 cold.

Oh, the rain, the mud, and the cold,
The cold, the mud, and the rain;
With weather at zero it's hard for a hero
From language that's rude to refrain.
With porridgy muck to the knees,
With sky that's a-pouring a flood,
Sure the worst of our foes
Are the pains and the woes
Of the *rain*,
 the *cold*,
 and the *mud*.

TIPPERARY DAYS

Oh, weren't they the fine boys! You never
saw the beat of them,
Singing all together with their throats
bronze-bare;
Fighting-fit and mirth-mad, music in the feet
of them,
Swinging on to glory and the wrath out
there.
Laughing by and chaffing by, frolic in the
smiles of them,
On the road, the white road, all the after-
noon;
Strangers in a strange land, miles and miles
and miles of them,
Battle-bound and heart-high, and singing this
tune:

*It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go;*

TIPPERARY DAYS

*It's a long way to Tipperary,
And the sweetest girl I know.
Good-bye, Piccadilly,
Farewell, Leicester Square:
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart's right there.*

Come, Yvonne and Juliette! Come, Mimi,
and cheer for them!

Throw them flowers and kisses as they pass
you by.

Aren't they the lovely lads! Haven't you a
tear for them

Going out so gallantly to dare and die?

What is it they're singing so? Some high
hymn of Motherland?

Some immortal chanson of their Faith and
King?

Marseillaise or Brabançon, anthem of that
other land,

Dears, let us remember it, that song they
sing:

TIPPERARY DAYS

*“ C’est un chemin long ‘ to Tepararee,’
C’est un chemin long, c’est vrai;
C’est un chemin long ‘ to Tepararee,’
Et la belle fille qu’je connais;
Bonjour, Peekadeely!
Au revoir, Lestaire Squaire!
C’est un chemin long ‘ to Tepararee,’
Mais mon coeur ‘ ces saire.’ ”*

The gallant old “Contemptibles”! There
isn’t much remains of them,
So full of fun and fitness, and a-singing in
their pride;
For some are cold as clabber and the corby
picks the brains of them,
And some are back in Blighty, and a-wishing
they had died.
And yet it seems but yesterday, that great,
glad sight of them,
Swinging on to battle as the sky grew black
and black;
But, oh their glee and glory, and the great,
grim fight of them! —

TIPPERARY DAYS

Just whistle Tipperary and it all comes
back:

It's a long way to Tipperary
(Which means "'ome" anywhere) ;
It's a long way to Tipperary
(And the things wot make you care).
Good-bye, Piccadilly,
('Ow I 'opes my folks is well) ;
It's a long, long way to Tipperary —
('R! Ain't War just 'ell?)

FLEURETTE

(The Wounded Canadian Speaks)

My leg? It's off at the knee.
Do I miss it? Well, some. You see
I've had it since I was born;
And lately a devilish corn.
(I rather chuckle with glee
To think of how I've fooled that corn.)

But I'll hobble around all right.
It isn't that, it's my face.
Oh I know I'm a hideous sight,
Hardly a thing in place;
Sort of gargoyle, you'd say;
Nurse won't give me a glass,
But I see the folks as they pass
Shudder and turn away;
Turn away in distress . . .
Mirror enough, I guess.

I'm gay! You bet I *am* gay;
But I wasn't a while ago.
If you'd seen me even to-day,

FLEURETTE

The darndest picture of woe,
With this Caliban mug of mine,
So ravaged and raw and red,
Turned to the wall — in fine,
Wishing that I was dead. . . .
What has happened since then,
Since I lay with my face to the wall,
The most despairing of men?
Listen! I'll tell you all.

That *poilu* across the way,
With the shrapnel wound in his head,
Has a sister; she came to-day
To sit awhile by his bed.
All morning I heard him fret:
“ Oh, when will she come, Fleurette? ”

Then sudden, a joyous cry;
The tripping of little feet;
The softest, tenderest sigh;
A voice so fresh and sweet;
Clear as a silver bell,
Fresh as the morning dew:
“ *C'est toi, c'est toi, Marcel!*
Mon frère, comme je suis heureuse! ”

FLEURETTE

So over the blanket's rim
I raised my terrible face,
And I saw — how I envied him!
A girl of such delicate grace;
Sixteen, all laughter and love;
As gay as a linnet, and yet
As tenderly sweet as a dove;
Half woman, half child — Fleurette.

Then I turned to the wall again.
(I was awfully blue, you see.)
And I thought with a bitter pain:
“Such visions are not for me.”
So there like a log I lay,
All hidden, I thought, from view,
When sudden I heard her say:
“Ah! Who is that *malheureux*?”
Then briefly I heard him tell
(However he came to know)
How I'd smothered a bomb that fell
Into the trench, and so
None of my men were hit,
Though it busted me up a bit.

Well, I didn't quiver an eye,

FLEURETTE

And he chattered and there she sat;
And I fancied I heard her sigh —
Though I wouldn't just swear to that.
And maybe she wasn't so bright,
Though she talked in a merry strain,
And I closed my eyes ever so tight,
Yet I saw her ever so plain:
Her dear little tilted nose,
Her delicate dimpled chin,
Her mouth like a budding rose,
And the glistening pearls within;
Her eyes like the violet:
Such a rare little queen — Fleurette.

And at last when she rose to go,
The light was a little dim,
And I ventured to peep, and so
I saw her, graceful and slim,
And she kissed him and kissed him, and oh,
How I envied and envied him!
So when she was gone I said
In rather a dreary voice
To him of the opposite bed:
“Ah, friend, how you must rejoice!
But me, I'm a thing of dread.

FLEURETTE

For me nevermore the bliss,
The thrill of a woman's kiss."

Then I stopped, for lo! she was there,
And a great light shone in her eyes.
And me! I could only stare,
I was taken so by surprise,
When gently she bent her head:
"*May I kiss you, Sergeant?*" she said.

Then she kissed my burning lips
With her mouth like a scented flower,
And I thrilled to the finger-tips,
And I hadn't even the power
To say: "God bless you, dear!"
And I felt such a precious tear
Fall on my withered cheek,
And darn it! I couldn't speak.

And so she went sadly away,
And I knew that my eyes were wet;
Ah, not to my dying day
Will I forget, forget!
Can you wonder now I am gay?
God bless her, that little Fleurette!

FUNK

When your marrer bone seems 'oller,
And you're glad you ain't no taller,
And you're all a-shakin' like you 'ad the chills;
When your skin creeps like a pullet's,
And you're duckin' all the bullets,
And you're green as gorgonzola round the
gills;
When your legs seem made of jelly,
And you're squeamish in the belly,
And you want to turn about and do a bunk:
For Gawd's sake, kid, don't show it!
Don't let your mateys know it —
You're just sufferin' from funk, funk, funk.

Of course there's no denyin'
That it ain't so easy tryin'
To grin and grip your rifle by the butt,
When the 'ole world rips a-sunder,
And you sees yer pal go under,

FUNK

As a bunch of shrapnel sprays 'im on the
nut ;

I admit it's 'ard contrivin',
When you 'ears the shells arrivin',
To discover you're a bloomin' bit o' spunk ;
But, my lad, you've got to do it,
And your God will see you through it,
For wot 'E 'ates is funk, funk, funk.

So stand up, son ; look gritty,
And just 'um a lively ditty,
And only be afraid to be afraid ;
Just 'old yer rifle steady,
And 'ave yer bay'nit ready,
For that's the way good soldier-men is made.
And if you 'as to die,
As it sometimes 'appens, why,
Far better die a 'ero than a skunk,
A-doin' of yer bit,
And so — to 'ell with it,
There ain't no bloomin' funk, funk, funk.

OUR HERO

“ Flowers, only flowers — bring me dainty
posies,

Blossoms for forgetfulness,” that was all he
said;

So we sacked our gardens, violets and roses,
Lilies white and bluebells laid we on his bed.
Soft his pale hands touched them, tenderly
caressing;

Soft into his tired eyes came a little light;
Such a wistful love-look, gentle as a blessing;
There amid the flowers waited he the night.

“ I would have you raise me; I can see the
West then:

I would see the sun set once before I go.”

So he lay a-gazing, seemed to be at rest then,
Quiet as a spirit in the golden glow.

So he lay a-watching rosy castles crumbling,
Moats of blinding amber, bastions of flame,
Rugged rifts of opal, crimson turrets tum-
bling;

So he lay a-dreaming till the shadows came.

OUR HERO

“ Open wide the window ; there’s a lark
a-singing ;

There’s a glad lark singing in the evening sky.
How it’s wild with rapture, radiantly wing-
ing :

Oh it’s good to hear that when one has to die.
I am horror-haunted from the hell they found
me ;

I am battle-broken, all I want is rest.

Ah ! It’s good to die so, blossoms all around
me,

And a kind lark singing in the golden West.”

“ Flowers, song and sunshine, just one thing
is wanting,

Just the happy laughter of a little child.”

So we brought our dearest, Doris all-enchant-
ing ;

Tenderly he kissed her ; radiant he smiled.

“ In the golden peace-time you will tell the
story

How for you and yours, sweet, bitter deaths
were ours. . . .

God bless little children ! ” So he passed to
glory,

So we left him sleeping, still amid the flow’rs.

MY MATE

I've been sittin' starin', starin' at 'is muddy
pair of boots,
And tryin' to convince meself it's 'im.
(Look out there, lad! That sniper — 'e's a
dysey when 'e shoots;
'E'll be layin' off you out the same as Jim.)
Jim as lies there in the dug-out with 'is blan-
ket round 'is 'ead,
To keep 'is brains from mixin' wi' the mud;
And 'is face as white as putty, and 'is over-
coat all red,
Like 'e's spilt a bloomin' paint-pot — but it's
blood.

And I'm tryin' to remember of a time we
wasn't pals.
'Ow often we've played 'ookey, 'im and me;
And sometimes it was music-'alls, and some-
times it was gals,

MY MATE

And even there we 'ad no disagree.
For when 'e copped Maria Jones, the one I
liked the best,
I shook 'is 'and and loaned 'im 'arf a quid;
I saw 'im through the parson's job, I 'elped
'im make 'is nest,
I even stood god-farther to the kid.

So when the war broke out, sez 'e: "Well,
wot abaht it, Joe?"
"Well, wot abaht it, lad?" sez I to 'im.
'Is missis made a awful fuss, but 'e was mad
to go
('E always was 'igh-sperrited was Jim).
Well, none of it's been 'eaven, and the most
of it's been 'ell,
But we've shared our baccy, and we've 'alved
our bread.
We'd all the luck at Wipers, and we shaved
through Noove Chapelle,
And . . . that snipin' barstard gits 'im on the
'ead.

MY MATE

Now wot I wants to know is, why it wasn't
me was took?

I've only got meself, 'e stands for three.

I'm plainer than a louse, while 'e was 'and-
some as a dook;

'E always ~~was~~ a better man than me.

'E was goin' 'ome next Toosday; 'e was 'appy
as a lark,

And 'e'd just received a letter from 'is kid;

And 'e struck a match to show me, as we
stood there in the dark,

When . . . that bleedin' bullet got 'im on
the lid.

'E was killed so awful sudden that 'e 'adn't
time to die.

'E sorto jumped, and came down wiv a thud.

Them corpsy-lookin' star-shells kept a-
streamin' in the sky,

And there 'e lay like nothin' in the mud.

And there 'e lay so quiet wiv no mansard to
'is 'ead,

And I'm sick, and blamed if I can under-
stand:

MY MATE

The pots of 'alf and 'alf we've 'ad, and *zip!*
like that —'e's dead,
Wiv the letter of 'is nipper in 'is 'and.

There's some as fights for freedom and
there's some as fights for fun,
But me, my lad, I fights for bleedin' 'ate.
You can blame the war and blast it, but I
'opes it won't be done
Till I gets the bloomin' blood-price for me
mate.
It'll take a bit o' bayonet to level up for Jim;
Then if I'm spared I think I'll 'ave a bid,
With 'er that was Mariar Jones to take the
place of 'im,
To sorter be a farther to 'is kid.

MILKING TIME

There's a drip of honeysuckle in the deep
green lane ;

There's old Martin jogging homeward on his
worn old wain ;

There are cheery petals falling, and a cuckoo
calling, calling,

And a score of larks (God bless 'em) . . .
but it's all pain, pain.

For you see I am not really there at all, not
at all ;

For you see I'm in the trenches where the
crump-crumps fall ;

And the bits o' shells are screaming and it's
only blessed dreaming

That in fancy I am seeming back in old Saint
Pol.

Oh, I've thought of it so often since I've
come down here ;

And I never dreamt that any place could be
so dear ;

MILKING TIME

The silvered whinstone houses, and the rosy
men in blouses,
And the kindly, white-capped women with
their eyes spring-clear.
And mother's sitting knitting where her roses
climb,
And the angelus is calling with a soft, soft
chime,
And the sea-wind comes caressing, and the
light's a golden blessing,
And Yvonne, Yvonne is guessing that it's
milking time.

Oh, it's Sunday, for she's wearing of her
broidered gown;
And she draws the pasture pickets and the
cows come down;
And their feet are powdered yellow, and
their voices honey-mellow,
And they bring a scent of clover, and their
eyes are brown.
And Yvonne is dreaming after, but her eyes
are blue;

MILKING TIME

And her lips are made for laughter, and her
white teeth too ;
And her mouth is like a cherry, and a dimple
mocking merry
Is lurking in the very cheek she turns to you.

So I walk beside her kindly, and she laughs
at me ;
And I heap her arms with lilac from the lilac
tree ;
And a golden light is welling, and a golden
peace is dwelling,
And a thousand birds are telling how it's
good to be.
And what are pouting lips for if they can't
be kissed ?
And I've filled her arms with blossom so she
can't resist ;
And the cows are sadly straying, and her
mother must be saying
That Yvonne is long delaying . . . *God!*
How close that missed!

MILKING TIME

A nice polite reminer that the Boche are
nigh;

That we're here to fight like devils, and if
need-be die;

That from kissing pretty wenches to the
frantic firing-benches

Of the battered, tattered trenches is a far, far
cry.

Yet still I'm sitting dreaming in the glare and
grime;

And once again I'm hearing of them church-
bells chime;

And how I wonder whether in the golden
summer weather

We will fetch the cows together when it's
milking time. . . .

English voice, months later:—

*"Ow Bill! A rottin' Frenchy. Whew! 'E
ain't 'arf prime." . . .*

YOUNG FELLOW MY LAD

"Where are you going, Young Fellow My
Lad,

On this glittering morn of May?"

"I'm going to join the Colours, Dad;
They're looking for men, they say."

"But you're only a boy, Young Fellow My
Lad;

You aren't obliged to go."

"I'm seventeen and a quarter, Dad,
And ever so strong, you know."

* * * * *

"So you're off to France, Young Fellow My
Lad,

And you're looking so fit and bright."

"I'm terribly sorry to leave you, Dad,
But I feel that I'm doing right."

"God bless you and keep you, Young Fellow
My Lad,

You're all of my life, you know."

"Don't worry. I'll soon be back, dear Dad,
And I'm awfully proud to go."

* * * * *

YOUNG FELLOW MY LAD

“Why don't you write, Young Fellow My
Lad?

I watch for the post each day;
And I miss you so, and I'm awfully sad,
And it's months since you went away.
And I've had the fire in the parlour lit,
And I'm keeping it burning bright
Till my boy comes home; and here I sit
Into the quiet night.”

* * * * *

“What is the matter, Young Fellow My
Lad?

No letter again to-day.
Why did the postman look so sad,
And sigh as he turned away?
I hear them tell that we've gained new
ground,
But a terrible price we've paid.
God grant, my boy, that you're safe and
sound;
But oh I'm afraid, afraid.”

* * * * *

YOUNG FELLOW MY LAD

“ They’ve told me the truth, Young Fellow
My Lad:

You’ll never come back again.

*(O God! the dreams and the dreams I’ve had,
And the hopes I’ve nursed in vain!)*

For you passed in the night, Young Fellow
My Lad,

And you proved in the cruel test
Of the screaming shell and the battle hell
That my boy was one of the best.”

“ So you’ll live, you’ll live, Young Fellow My
Lad,

In the gleam of the evening star,
In the wood note wild and the laugh of the
child,

In all sweet things that are.

And you’ll never die, my wonderful boy,
While life is noble and true;
For all our beauty and hope and joy
We will owe to our lads like you.”

A SONG OF THE SANDBAGS

No, Bill, I'm not a-spooning out no patriotic
tosh

(The cove be'ind the sandbags ain't a death-
or-glory cuss).

And though I strafes 'em good and 'ard I
doesn't 'ate the Boche,

I guess they're mostly decent, just the same
as most of us.

I guess they loves their 'omes and kids as
much as you or me,

And just the same as you or me they'd rather
shake than fight;

And if we'd 'appened to be born at Berlin-
on-the-Spree,

We'd be out there with 'Ans and Fritz, dead
sure that we was right.

A-standin' up to the sandbags
It's funny the thoughts wot come;

A SONG OF THE SANDBAGS

Starin' into the darkness,
'Earin' the bullets 'um;
(Zing! Zip Ping! Rip!
'Ark 'ow the bullets 'um!)
A-leanin' against the sandbags
Wiv me rifle under me ear,
Oh, I've 'ad more thoughts on a sentry-go
Than I used to 'ave in a year.

I wonder, Bill, if 'Ans and Fritz is wonderin'
like me
Wot's at the bottom of it all? Wot all the
slaughter's for?
'E thinks 'e's right (of course 'e ain't) but
this we both agree,
If them as made it 'ad to fight, there wouldn't
be no war.
If them as lies in feather beds while we kips
in the mud;
If them as makes their fortoons while we
fights for 'em like 'ell;
If them as slings their pots of ink just 'ad
to sling their blood:
By Crust! I'm thinkin' there 'ud be another
tale to tell.

A SONG OF THE SANDBAGS

Shiverin' up to the sandbags,
With a hicicle 'stead of a spine,
Don't it seem funny the things you think
'Ere in the firin' line:
(Whee! Whut! Ziz! Zut!
Lord! 'Ow the bullets whine!)
Hunkerin' down when a star-shell
Cracks in a sputter of light,
You can jaw to your soul by the sandbags
'Most any old time o' night.

They talks o' England's glory and a-'oldin'
of our trade,
Of Empire and 'igh destiny until we're fair
film-flammed;
But if it's for the likes o' that that bloody
war is made,
Then wot I say is: Empire and 'igh destiny
be damned!
There's only one good cause, Bill, for poor
blokes like us to fight:
That's self-defence, fer 'earth and 'ome, and
them that bears our name;

A SONG OF THE SANDBAGS

And that's wot I'm a-doin' by the sandbags
'ere to-night. . . .

But Fritz out there will tell you 'e's a-doin'
of the same.

Starin' over the sandbags,
Sick of the 'ole damn thing;
Firin' to keep meself awake,
'Earin' the bullets sing.

(Hiss! Twang! Tsing! Pang!
Saucy the bullets sing.)

Dreamin' 'ere by the sandbags
Of a day when war will cease,
When 'Ans and Fritz and Bill and me
Will clink our mugs in fraternity,
And the Brotherhood of Labour will be
The Brotherhood of Peace.

ON THE WIRE

Oh God, take the sun from the sky!
It's burning me, scorching me up.
God, can't You hear my cry?
Water! A poor, little cup!
It's laughing, the cursed sun!
See how it swells and swells
Fierce as a hundred hells!
God, will it never have done?
It's searing the flesh on my bones;
It's beating with hammers red
My eyeballs into my head;
It's parching my very moans.
See! It's the size of the sky,
And the sky is a torrent of fire,
Foaming on me as I lie
Here on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

Of the thousands that wheeze and hum
Heedlessly over my head,
Why can't a bullet come,
Pierce to my brain instead;
Blacken forever my brain,

ON THE WIRE

Finish forever my pain?
Here in the hellish glare
Why must I suffer so?
Is it God doesn't care?
Is it God doesn't know?
Oh, to be killed outright,
Clean in the clash of the fight!
That is a golden death,
That is a boon; but this . . .
Drawing an anguished breath
Under a hot abyss,
Under a stooping sky
Of seething, sulphurous fire,
Scorching me up as I lie
Here on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

Hasten, O God, Thy night!
Hide from my eyes the sight
Of the body I stare and see
Shattered so hideously.
I can't believe that it's mine.
My body was white and sweet,
Flawless and fair and fine,
Shapeless from head to feet;
Oh no, I can never be

ON THE WIRE

The thing of horror I see
Under the rifle fire,
Trussed on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

Of night and of death I dream;
Night that will bring me peace,
Coolness and starry gleam,
Stillness and death's release:
Ages and ages have passed —
Lo! it is night at last.
Night! but the guns roar out.
Night! but the hosts attack.
Red and yellow and black
Geysers of doom upspout.
Silver and green and red
Star-shells hover and spread.
Yonder off to the right
Fiercely kindles the fight;
Roaring near and more near,
Thundering now in my ear;
Close to me, close . . . Oh, hark!
Someone moans in the dark.
I hear, but I cannot see,
I hear as the rest retire,
Someone is caught like me,
Caught on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

ON THE WIRE

Again the shuddering dawn,
Weird and wicked and wan;
Again, and I've not yet gone.
The man whom I heard is dead.
Now I can understand:
A bullet hole in his head,
A pistol gripped in his hand.
Well, he knew what to do,—
Yes, and now I know too. . . .

Hark the resentful guns!
Oh, how thankful am I
To think my beloved ones
Will never know how I die!
I've suffered more than my share;
I'm shattered beyond repair;
I've fought like a man the fight,
And now I demand the right
(God! how his fingers cling!)
To do without shame this thing.
Good! there's a bullet still;
Now I'm ready to fire;
Blame me, God, if You will,
Here on the wire . . . the wire. . . .

BILL'S GRAVE

I'm gatherin' flowers by the wayside to lay
on the grave of Bill;
I've sneaked away from the billet, 'cause Jim
wouldn't understand;
'E'd call me a silly fat'ead, and larf till it
made 'im ill,
To see me 'ere in the cornfield, wiv a big
bookay in me 'and.

For Jim and me we are rough uns, but Bill
was one o' the best;
We 'listed and learned together to larf at the
wust wot comes;
Then Bill copped a packet proper, and took
'is departure West,
So sudden 'e 'adn't a minit to say good-bye to
'is chums.

BILL'S GRAVE

And they took me to where 'e was planted,
a sort of a measly mound,
And, thinks I, 'ow Bill would be tickled, bein'
so soft and queer,
If I gathered a bunch o' them wild-flowers,
and sort of arranged them round
Like a kind of a bloody headpiece . . . and
that's the reason I'm here.

But not for the love of glory I wouldn't 'ave
Jim to know.
'E'd call me a slobberin' Sissy, and larf till 'is
sides was sore ;
I'd 'ave larfed at meself meself too, it isn't
so long ago ;
But some'ow it changes a feller, 'avin' a
taste of war.

It 'elps a man to be 'elpful, to know wot 'is
pals is worth
(Them golden poppies is blazin' like lamps
some fairy 'as lit) ;
I'm fond o' them big white dysies. . . . Now
Jim's o' the salt o' the earth ;

BILL'S GRAVE

But 'e 'as got a tongue wot's a terror, and
'e ain't sentimental a bit.

I likes them blue chaps wot's 'idin' so shylike
among the corn.

Won't Bill be glad! We was allus thicker
'n thieves, us three.

Why! 'Oo's that singin' so 'earty? *Jim!*
And as sure as I'm born

'E's there in the giddy cornfields, a-gatherin'
flowers like me.

Quick! Drop me posy be'ind me. I
watches 'im for a while,

Then I says: "Wot 'o, there, Chummy!
Wot price the little bookay?"

And 'e starts like a bloke wot's guilty, and 'e
says with a sheepish smile:

"She's a bit of orl right, the widder wot
keeps the estaminay."

So 'e goes away in a 'urrray, and I wishes 'im
best o' luck,

And I picks up me bunch o' wild-flowers,
and the light's gettin' sorto dim,

BILL'S GRAVE

When I makes me way to the boneyard, and
 . . . I stares like a man wot's stuck,
For wot do I see? *Bill's grave-mound*
 strewn with the flowers of Jim.

Of course I won't never tell 'im, bein' a tactical lad;
And Jim parley-voos to the widder: "Trez
 beans, lamoor; compree?"
Oh, 'e'd die of shame if 'e knew I knew; but
 say! won't Bill be glad
When 'e stares through the bleedin' clods and
 sees the blossoms of Jim and me!

JEAN DESPREZ

Oh ye whose hearts are resonant, and ring
to War's romance,
Hear ye the story of a boy, a peasant boy of
France;
A lad uncouth and warped with toil, yet who,
when trial came,
Could feel within his soul upleap and soar
the sacred flame;
Could stand upright, and scorn and smite, as
only heroes may:
Oh, harken! Let me try to tell the tale of
Jean Desprez.

With fire and sword the Teuton horde was
ravaging the land,
And there was darkness and despair, and
death on every hand;
Red fields of slaughter sloping down to ruin's
black abyss;

JEAN DESPREZ

The wolves of war ran evil-fanged, and little did they miss.

And on they came with fear and flame, to burn and loot and slay,

Until they reached the red-roofed croft, the home of Jean Desprez.

“Rout out the village, one and all!” the Uhlan Captain said.

“Behold! Some hand has fired a shot. My trumpeter is dead.

Now shall they Prussian vengeance know; now shall they rue the day,

For by this sacred German slain, ten of these dogs shall pay.”

They drove the cowering peasants forth, women and babes and men,

And from the last, with many a jeer, the Captain chose he ten;

Ten simple peasants, bowed with toil; they stood, they knew not why,

Against the grey wall of the church, hearing their children cry;

JEAN DESPREZ

Hearing their wives and mothers wail, with
faces dazed they stood.

A moment only. . . . *Ready! Fire!* They
weltered in their blood.

But there was one who gazed unseen, who
heard the frenzied cries,

Who saw these men in sabots fall before
their children's eyes;

A zouave wounded in a ditch, and knowing
death was nigh,

He laughed with joy: "Ah! here is where
I settle ere I die."

He clutched his rifle once again, and long
he aimed and well. . . .

A shot! Beside his victims ten the Uhlan
Captain fell.

They dragged the wounded zouave out; their
rage was like a flame.

With bayonets they pinned him down, until
their Major came.

A blonde, full-blooded man he was, and ar-
rogant of eye;

JEAN DESPREZ

He stared to see with shattered skull his
favourite Captain lie.

“Nay, do not finish him so quick, this foreign
swine,” he cried;

“Go nail him to the big church door : he shall
be crucified.”

With bayonets through hands and feet they
nailed the zouave there,

And there was anguish in his eyes, and horror
in his stare;

“Water! A single drop!” he moaned; but
how they jeered at him,

And mocked him with an empty cup, and
saw his sight grow dim;

And as in agony of death with blood his lips
were wet,

The Prussian Major gaily laughed, and lit a
cigarette.

But mid the white-faced villagers who
cowered in horror by,

Was one who saw the woeful sight, who
heard the woeful cry:

JEAN DESPREZ

“Water! One little drop, I beg! For love
of Christ who died. . . .”

It was the little Jean Desprez who turned and
stole aside;

It was the little bare-foot boy who came with
cup abrim,

And walked up to the dying man, and gave
the drink to him.

A roar of rage! They seize the boy; they
tear him fast away.

The Prussian Major swings around; no longer
is he gay.

His teeth are wolfishly agleam; his face all
dark with spite:

“Go, shoot the brat,” he snarls, “that dare
defy our Prussian might.

Yet stay! I have another thought. I’ll
kindly be, and spare;

Quick! give the lad a rifle charged, and set
him squarely there,

And bid him shoot, and shoot to kill. Haste!
Make him understand

JEAN DESPREZ

The dying dog he fain would save shall perish by his hand.

And all his kindred they shall see, and all shall curse his name,

Who bought his life at such a cost, the price of death and shame."

They brought the boy, wild-eyed with fear;
they made him understand;

They stood him by the dying man, a rifle in his hand.

"Make haste!" said they; "the time is short, and you must kill or die."

The Major puffed his cigarette, amusement in his eye.

And then the dying zouave heard, and raised his weary head:

"Shoot, son, 'twill be the best for both; shoot swift and straight," he said.

"Fire first and last, and do not flinch, for lost to hope am I;

And I will murmur: *Vive La France!* and bless you ere I die."

JEAN DESPREZ

Half-blind with blows the boy stood there;
 he seemed to swoon and sway;
Then in that moment woke the soul of little
 Jean Desprez.
He saw the woods go sheening down; the
 larks were singing clear;
And oh! the scents and sounds of spring,
 how sweet they were! how dear!
He felt the scent of new-mown hay, a soft
 breeze fanned his brow;
O, God! the paths of peace and toil! How
 precious were they now!
The summer days and summer ways, how
 bright with hope and bliss!
The autumn such a dream of gold . . . and
 all must end in this:
This shining rifle in his hand, that shambles
 all around;
That Zouave there with dying glare; the
 blood upon the ground;
The brutal faces round him ringed, the evil
 eyes aflame;
That Prussian bully standing by, as if he
 watched a game.

JEAN DESPREZ

“ Make haste and shoot,” the Major sneered;
 “ A minute more I give;
A minute more to kill your friend, if you
 yourself would live.”

They only saw a barefoot boy, with blanched
 and twitching face;

They did not see within his eyes the glory of
 his race;

The glory of a million men who for fair
 France have died,

The splendour of self-sacrifice that will not
 be denied.

Yet . . . he was but a peasant lad, and oh!
 . . . but life was sweet. . . .

“ Your minute’s nearly gone, my lad,” he
 heard a voice repeat.

“ Shoot! Shoot!” the dying Zouave
 moaned; “ Shoot! Shoot!” the soldiers
 said,

Then Jean Desprez reached out and shot . . .
 the Prussian Major dead!

GOING HOME

I'm goin' 'ome to Blighty — ain't I glad to
'ave the chance!

I'm loaded up with fightin' and I've 'ad my
fill o' France;

I'm feelin' so excited-like, I want to sing and
dance,

For I'm goin' 'ome to Blighty in the
mawnin'.

I'm goin' 'ome to Blighty: can you wonder as
I'm gay?

I've got a wound I wouldn't sell for 'alf a
year o' pay;

A harm that's mashed to jelly in the nicest
sort o' way,

For it takes me 'ome to Blighty in the
mawnin'.

'Ow everlastin' keen I was on gettin' to the
front!

GOING HOME

I'd ginger for a dozen, and I 'elped to bear
the brunt;

But Cheese and Crust! I'm crazy, now I've
done me little stunt,

To sniff the air of Blighty in the mawnin'.

I've looked upon the wine that's white, and
on the wine that's red;

I've looked on cider flowin', till it fairly
turned me 'ead;

But oh, the finest scoff will be, when all is
done and said,

A pint o' Bass in Blighty in the mawnin'!

I'm goin' back to Blighty, which I left to
strafe the 'Un;

I've fought in bloody battles, and I've 'ad a
'eap of fun;

But now me flipper's busted, and I think me
dooty's done,

And I'll kiss me gel in Blighty in the
mawnin'.

Oh, there be furrin' lands to see, and some
of 'em be fine;

GOING HOME

And there be furrin' gels to kiss, and scented
furrin' wine;

But there's no land like England, and no
other gel like mine:

Thank Gawd for dear old Blighty in the
mawnin'.

COCOTTE

When a girl's sixteen, and as poor as she's
pretty,
And she hasn't a friend and she hasn't a
home,
Heigh-ho! She's as safe in Paris city
As a lamb night-strayed where the wild
wolves roam;
And that was I. Oh, it's seven years now
(Some water's run down the Seine since
then),
And I've almost forgotten the pangs and the
tears now,
And I've almost taken the measure of men.

Oh, I found me a lover who loved me only,
Artist and poet, and almost a boy.
And my heart was bruised, and my life was
lonely,
And him I adored with a wonderful joy.

COCOTTE

If he'd come to me with his pockets empty,
How we'd have laughed in a garret gay!
But he was rich, and in radiant plenty
We lived in a villa at Viroflay.

Then came the War, and of bliss bereft me;
Then came the call, and he went away;
All that he had in the world he left me,
With the rose-wreathed villa at Viroflay.
Then came the news and the tragic story:
My hero, my splendid lover was dead,
Sword in hand on the field of glory,
And he died with my name on his lips, they
said.

So here am I in my widow's mourning,
The weeds I've really no right to wear;
And women fix me with eyes of scorning,
Call me "cocotte," but I do not care.
And men look at me with eyes that borrow
The brightness of love, but I turn away;
Alone, say I, I will live with Sorrow,
In my little villa at Viroflay.

COCOTTE

And lo! I'm living alone with — *Pity*,
And they say that pity from love's not far;
Let me tell you all: last week in the city
I took the metro at Saint Lazare;
And the carriage was crowded to overflowing,
And when there entered at Chateaudun
Two wounded *poilus* with medals showing,
I eagerly gave my seat to one.

You should have seen them: they'd slipped
death's clutches,
But sadder a sight you will rarely find;
One had a leg off and walked on crutches,
The other, a bit of a boy, was blind.
And they both sat down, and the lad was
trying
To grope his way as a blind man tries;
And half of the women around were crying,
And some of the men had tears in their eyes.

How he stirred me, this blind boy, clinging
Just like a child to his crippled chum.
But I did not cry. Oh no; a singing
Came to my heart for a year so dumb.

COCOTTE

Then I knew that at three-and-twenty
There is wonderful work to be done,
Comfort and kindness and joy in plenty,
Peace and light and love to be won.

Oh, thought I, could mine eyes be given
To one who will live in the dark always!
To love and to serve—'twould make life
Heaven

Here in my villa at Viroflay.
So I left my *poilus*: and now you wonder
Why to-day I am so elate. . . .
Look! In the glory of sunshine yonder
They're bringing my blind boy in at the gate.

MY BAY'NIT

MY BAY'NIT

When first I left Blighty they gave me a
bay'nit,

And told me it 'ad to be smothered wiv
gore;

But blimey! I 'aven't been able to stain it,
So far as I've gone wiv the vintage of war.
For ain't it a fraud! when a Boche and yours
truly

Gits into a mix in the grit and the grime,
He jerks up 'is 'ands wiv a yell, and 'e's duly
Part o' me outfit every time.

Left, right, Hans and Fritz!
Goose step, keep up yer mits!
Oh my, ain't it a shyme!
Part of me outfit every time.

At toasting a biscuit me bay'nit's a dandy;
I've used it to open a bully beef can;
For pokin' the fire it comes in werry 'andy;
For any old thing but for sticking a man.
How often I said: " 'Ere, I'm goin' to press
you

MY BAY'NIT

Into a 'Un till you're seasoned for prime,"
And fiercely I rushes to do it, but bless you!
Part of me outfit every time.

Lor, yus; *don't* they look glad?
Right o! 'Owl Kamerad!
Oh my! always the syme!
Part of me outfit every time.

I'm 'untin' for some one to christen me
bay'nit,
Some nice juicy Chewton wot's fightin' in
France;
I'm fairly down-'earted—'ow *can* yer ex-
plain it?
I keeps gettin' prisoners every chance.
As soon as they sees me they ups and sur-
renders,
Extended like monkeys wot's tryin' to climb;
And I uses me bay'nit—to slit their sus-
penders—
Part of me outfit every time.

Four 'Uns; lor, wot a bag!
'Ere, Fritz, sample a fag!
Oh, my! ain't it a gyme!
Part of me outfit every time.

CARRY ON!

CARRY ON!

It's easy to fight when everything's right,
And you're mad with the thrill and the glory;
It's easy to cheer when victory's near,
And wallow in fields that are gory.
It's a different song when everything's wrong,
When you're feeling infernally mortal;
When it's ten against one, and hope there is
 none,
Buck up, little soldier, and chortle:

 Carry on! Carry on!
 There isn't much punch in your blow.
You're glaring and staring and hitting out
 blind;
You're muddy and bloody, but never you
 mind.

 Carry on! Carry on!
You haven't the ghost of a show.

CARRY ON!

It's looking like death, but while you've a
breath,

Carry on, my son! Carry on!

And so in the strife of the battle of life
It's easy to fight when you're winning;
It's easy to slave, and starve and be brave,
When the dawn of success is beginning.
But the man who can meet despair and defeat
With a cheer, there's the man of God's choos-
ing;

The man who can fight to Heaven's own
height

Is the man who can fight when he's losing.

Carry on! Carry on!

Things never were looming so black;
But show that you haven't a cowardly streak,
And though you're unlucky you never are
weak.

Carry on! Carry on!

Brace up for another attack.

It's looking like hell, but—you never can
tell:

Carry on, old man! Carry on!

CARRY ON!

There are some who drift out in the deserts
of doubt,
And some who in brutishness wallow ;
There are others, I know, who in piety go,
Because of a Heaven to follow.
But to labour with zest, and to give of your
best,
For the sweetness and joy of the giving ;
To help folks along with a hand and a song :
Why, there's the real sunshine of living.

Carry on! Carry on!
Fight the good fight and true ;
Believe in your mission, greet dawn with a
cheer ;
There's big work to do and that's why you
are here.

Carry on! Carry on!
Let the world be the better for you ;
And at last when you die, let this be your
cry :

Carry on, my soul! Carry on!

OVER THE PARAPET

All day long when the shells sail over
I stand at the sandbags and take my chance;
But at night, at night I'm a reckless rover,
And over the parapet gleams Romance.
Romance! Romance! How I've dreamed
it, writing

Dreary old records of money and mart,
Me with my head chuckful of fighting
And the blood of vikings to thrill my heart.

But little I thought that my time was coming,

Sudden and splendid, supreme and soon;
And here I am with the bullets humming
As I crawl and I curse the light of the moon.
Out alone, for adventure thirsting,
Out in mysterious No Man's Land;
Prone with the dead when a star-shell, bursting,

Flares on the horrors on every hand.

OVER THE PARAPET

There are ruby stars and they drip and
wobble ;

And the grasses gleam in a light blood-red ;
There are emerald stars, and their tails they
wiggle,

And ghastly they glare on the face of the
dead.

But the worst of all are the stars of white-
ness,

That spill in a pool of pearly flame,
Pretty as gems in their silver brightness,
And etching a man for a bullet's aim.

Yet oh, it's great to be here with danger,
Here in the weird, death-pregnant dark,
In the devil's pasture a stealthy ranger,
When the moon is decently hiding. Hark !
What was that? Was it just the shiver
Of an eerie wind or a clammy hand?
The rustle of grass, or the passing quiver
Of one of the ghosts of No Man's Land?

It's only at night when the ghosts awaken,
And gibber and whisper horrible things ;

OVER THE PARAPET

For to every foot of this God-forsaken
Zone of jeopard some horror clings.
Ugh! What was that? It felt like a jelly,
That flattish mound in the noisome grass;
You three big rats running free of its belly,
Out of my way and let me pass!

But if there's horror, there's beauty, wonder;
The trench lights gleam and the rockets
 play.
That flood of magnificent orange yonder
Is a battery blazing miles away.
With a rush and a singing a great shell
 passes;
The rifles resentfully bicker and brawl,
And here I crouch in the dew-drenched
 grasses,
And look and listen and love it all.

God! What a life! But I must make
 haste now,
Before the shadow of night be spent.
It's little the time there is to waste now,
If I'd do the job for which I was sent.

OVER THE PARAPET

My bombs are right and my clippers ready,
And I wriggle out to the chosen place,
When I hear a rustle. . . . Steady! . . .
Steady!

Who am I staring slap in the face?

There in the dark I can hear him breathing,
A foot away, and as still as death;
And my heart beats hard, and my brain is
seething,
And I know he's a Hun by the smell of his
breath.

Then: "Will you surrender?" I whisper
hoarsely,
For it's death, swift death to utter a cry.
"English schwein-hund!" he murmurs
coarsely.

"Then we'll fight it out in the dark," say I.

So we grip and we slip and we trip and
wrestle

There in the gutter of No Man's Land;
And I feel my nails in his wind-pipe nestle,
And he tries to gouge, but I bite his hand.

OVER THE PARAPET

And he tries to squeal, but I squeeze him tighter :

“ Now,” I say, “ I can kill you fine ;
But tell me first, you Teutonic blighter !
Have you any children ? ” He answers :
“ Nein.”

Nine! Well, I cannot kill such a father,
So I tie his hands and I leave him there.
Do I finish my little job? Well, rather ;
And I get home safe with some light to
spare.

Heigh-ho ! by day it's just prosy duty,
Doing the same old song and dance ;
But oh ! with the night — joy, glory, beauty :
Over the parapet — Life, Romance !

THE BALLAD OF SOULFUL SAM

You want me to tell you a story, a yarn of
the firin' line,
Of our thin red kharki 'eroes, out there where
the bullets whine;
Out there where the bombs are bustin', and
the cannons like 'ell-doors slam —
Just order another drink, boys, and I'll tell
you of Soulful Sam.

Oh, Sam, he was never 'ilarious, though I've
'ad some mates as was wus;
He 'adn't C. B. on his programme, he never
was known to cuss.
For a card or a skirt or a beer-mug he 'adn't
a friendly word;
But when it came down to Scriptures, say!
Wasn't he just a bird!

THE BALLAD OF SOULFUL SAM

He 'always 'ad tracts in his pocket, the which
 he would haste to present,
And though the fellers would use them in
 ways that they never was meant,
I used to read 'em religious, and frequent
 I've been impressed
By some of them bundles of 'oly dope he
 carried around in his vest.

For I — and oh, 'ow I shudder at the 'orror
 the word conveys!
'Ave been — let me whisper it 'oarsely — a
 gambler 'alf of me days;
A gambler, you 'ear — a gambler. It makes
 me wishful to weep,
And yet 'ow it's true, my brethren! — I'd
 rather gamble than sleep.

I've gambled the 'ole world over, from
 Monte Carlo to Maine;
From Dawson City to Dover, from San
 Francisco to Spain.

THE BALLAD OF SOULFUL SAM

Cards! They 'ave been me ruin. They've
taken me pride and me pelf,
And when I'd no one to play with — why, I'd
go and I'd play by meself.

And Sam 'e would sit and watch me, as I
shuffled a greasy deck,
And 'e'd say: "You're bound to Perdition,"
And I'd answer: "Git off me neck!"
And that's 'ow we came to get friendly,
though built on a different plan,
Me wot's a desprite gambler, 'im sich a good
young man.

But on to me tale. Just imagine . . . Dark-
ness! The battle-front!
The furious 'Uns attackin'! Us ones
a-bearin' the brunt!
Me crouchin' be'ind a sandbag, tryin' 'ard to
keep calm,
When I 'ears some one singin' a 'ymn toon;
— be'old! it is Soulful Sam.

THE BALLAD OF SOULFUL SAM

Yes, right in the crash of the combat, in the
fury of flash and flame,
'E was shootin' and singin' serenely as if 'e
enjoyed the same.
And there in the 'eat of the battle, as the
'ordes of demons attacked,
He dipped down into 'is tunic, and 'e 'anded
me out a tract.

Then a star-shell flared, and I read it: Oh
Flee From The Wrath To Come!
Nice cheerful subject, I tell yer, when you're
'earin' the bullets 'um.
And before I 'ad time to thank 'im, just one
of them bits of lead
Comes slingin' along in a 'urry, and it 'its my
partner. . . . Dead?

No, siree! Not by a long sight! For it
plugged 'im 'ard on the chest,
Just where 'e'd tracts for a army corps
stowed away in 'is vest.

THE BALLAD OF SOULFUL SAM

On its mission of death that bullet 'ustled
along, and it caved
A 'ole in them tracts to 'is 'ide, boys,— but
the life o' me pal was saved.

And there as 'e showed me in triumph, and
'orror was chokin' me breath,
On came another bullet on its 'orrible mis-
sion of death;
On through the night it cavorted, seekin' its
'aven of rest,
And it zipped through a crack in the sand-
bags, and it wolloped me bang on the
breast.

Was I killed, do you ask? Oh no, boys.
Why am I sittin' 'ere
Gazin' with mournful vision at a mug long
empty of beer?
With a throat as dry as a — oh, thanky! I
don't much mind if I do.
Beer with a dash of 'ollands, that's my par-
ticular brew.

THE BALLAD OF SOULFUL SAM

Yes, that was a terrible moment. It 'ammered me 'ard o'er the 'eart;
It bowled me down like a ninepin, and I
looked for the gore to start;
And I saw in the flash of a moment, in that
thunder of hate and strife,
Me wretched past like a pitchur — the sins
of a gambler's life.

For I 'ad no tracts to save me, to thwart
that made missile's doom;
I 'ad no pious pamphlets to 'elp me to cheat
the tomb;
I 'ad no 'oly leaflets to baffle a bullet's aim;
I'd only — a deck of cards, boys, but . . .
it seemed to do just the same.

ONLY A BOCHE

We brought him in from between the lines :
we'd better have let him lie ;
For what's the use of risking one's skin for
a *tyke* that's going to die ?
What's the use of tearing him loose under a
gruelling fire,
When he's shot in the head, and worse than
dead, and all messed up on the wire ?
However, I say, we brought him in. *Diable !*
The mud was bad ;
The trench was crooked and greasy and high,
and oh, what a time we had !
And often we slipped, and often we tripped,
but never he made a moan ;
And how we were wet with blood and with
sweat, but we carried him in like our
own.

Now there he lies in the dug-out dim, await-
ing the ambulance,

ONLY A BOCHE

And the doctor shrugs his shoulders at him,
and remarks, "He hasn't a chance."
As we squat and smoke at our game of bridge
on the glistening, straw-packed floor,
And above our oaths we can hear his breath
deep-drawn in a kind of snore.

For the dressing station is long and low,
and the candles gutter dim,
And the mean light falls on the cold clay
walls and our faces bristly and grim;
And we flap our cards on the lousy straw,
and we laugh and jibe as we play,
And you'd never know that the cursed foe
was less than a mile away.
As we con our cards in the rancid gloom,
oppressed by that snoring breath,
You'd never dream that our broad roof-
beam was swept by the broom of death.

Heigh-ho! My turn for the dummy hand;
I rise and I stretch a bit;
The fetid air is making me yawn, and my
cigarette's unlit,

ONLY A BOCHE

So I go to the nearest candle flame, and the
man we brought is there,
And his face is white in the shabby light,
and I stand at his feet and stare.
Stand for awhile, and quietly stare: for
strange though it seems to be,
The dying Boche on the stretcher there has
a queer resemblance to me.

It gives one a kind of a turn, you know, to
come on a thing like that.
It's just as if I were lying there, with a tur-
ban of blood for a hat,
Lying there in a coat grey-green instead of
a coat grey-blue,
With one of my eyes all shot away, and my
brain half tumbling through;
Lying there with a chest that heaves like a
bellows up and down,
And a cheek as white as snow on a grave,
and lips that are coffee brown.

And confound him, too! He wears, like me,
on his finger a wedding ring,

ONLY A BOCHE

And around his neck, as around my own, by
a greasy bit of string,
A locket hangs with a woman's face, and I
turn it about to see:
Just as I thought . . . on the other side the
faces of children three;
Clustered together cherub-like, three little
laughing girls,
With the usual tiny rosebud mouths and the
usual silken curls.
"Zut!" I say, "he has beaten me; for me,
I have only two,"
And I push the locket beneath his shirt,
feeling a little blue.

Oh, it isn't cheerful to see a man, the marvel-
lous work of God,
Crushed in the mutilation mill, crushed to a
smeary clod;
Oh, it isn't cheerful to hear him moan, but
it isn't that I mind,
It isn't the anguish that goes with him, it's
the anguish he leaves behind.

ONLY A BOCHE

For his going opens a tragic door that gives
on a world of pain,
And the death he dies, those who live and
love, will die again and again.

So here I am at my cards once more, but it's
kind of spoiling my play,
Thinking of those three brats of his so many
a mile away.

War is war, and he's only a Boche, and we
all of us take our chance;

But all the same I'll be mighty glad when
I'm hearing the ambulance.

One foe the less, but all the same I'm heartily
glad I'm not

The man who gave him his broken head, the
sniper who fired the shot.

No trumps you make it, I think you said?
You'll pardon me if I err;

For a moment I thought of other things. . . .
Mon Dieu! Quelle vache de guerre.

PILGRIMS

For, oh, when the war will be over
We'll go and we'll look for our dead;
We'll go when the bee's on the clover,
And the plume of the poppy is red:
We'll go when the year's at its gayest,
When meadows are laughing with flow'rs;
And there where the crosses are greyest,
We'll seek for the cross that is ours.

For they cry to us: *Friends, we are lonely,
A-weary the night and the day;
But come in the blossom-time only,
Come when our graves will be gay:
When daffodils all are a-blowing,
And larks are a-thrilling the skies,
Oh, come with the hearts of you glowing,
And the joy of the Spring in your eyes.*

PILGRIMS

*But never, oh, never come sighing,
For ours was the Splendid Release;
And oh, but 'twas joy in the dying
To know we were winning you Peace!
So come when the valleys are sheening,
And fledged with the promise of grain;
And here where our graves will be greening,
Just smile and be happy again.*

And so, when the war will be over,
We'll seek for the Wonderful One;
And maiden will look for her lover,
And mother will look for her son;
And there will be end to our grieving,
And gladness will gleam over loss,
As — glory beyond all believing!
We point — to a name on a cross.

MY PRISONER

MY PRISONER

We was in a crump-'ole, 'im and me;
Fightin' wiv our bayonets was we;
Fightin' 'ard as 'ell we was,
Fightin' fierce as fire because
It was 'im or me as must be downed;
'E was twice as big as me;
I was 'arf the weight of 'e;
We was like a terryer and a 'ound.

'Struth! But 'e was sich a 'andsome bloke.
Me — I'm 'andsome as a chunk o' coke.
Did I give it 'im? Not 'arf!
Why, it fairly made me laugh,
'Cos 'is bloomin' bellows wasn't sound,
Couldn't fight for monkey-nuts.
Soon I gets 'im in the guts,
There 'e lies a-floppin' on the ground.

MY PRISONER

In I goes to finish up the job.
Quick 'e throws 'is 'ands above 'is nob;
Speakin' English good as me:
" 'Tain't no use to kill," says 'e;
" Can't yer tyke me prisoner instead?"
" Why, I'd like to, sir," says I;
" But — yer knows the reason why:
If we pokes our noses out we're dead.

" Sorry, sir. Then, on the other 'and
(As a gent like you must understand),
If I 'olds you longer 'ere,
Wiv yer pals so werry near,
It's me 'o'll 'ave a free trip to Berlin;
If I lets yer go away,
Why, you'll fight another day:
See the sitooation I am in.

" Anyway I'll tell you wot I'll do,
Bein' kind and seein' as it's you,
Knowin' 'ow it's cold, the feel
Of a 'alf a yard o' steel,
I'll let yer 'ave a rifle ball instead;
Now, jist think yerself in luck. . . .

MY PRISONER

'Ere, ol' man! You keep 'em stuck,
Them saucy dooks o' yours, above yer 'ead."

'Ow 'is mits shot up, it made me smile!
'Ow 'e seemed to ponder for a while.
Then 'e says: "It seems a shyme,
Me, a man wot's known ter Fyme:
Give me blocks of stone, I'll give yer gods.
Whereas, pardon me, I'm sure
You, my friend, are still obscure. . . ."
"In war," says I, "that makes no blurry
odds."

Then says 'e: "I've painted picters too. . . .
Oh, dear God! The work I planned to do,
And to think this is the end!"
"'Ere," says I, "my hartist friend,
Don't you give yerself no friskin' airs.
Picters, statoos, is that why
You should be let off to die?
That the best ye done? Just say yer
prayers."

MY PRISONER

Once again 'e seems ter think awhile.
Then 'e smiles a werry 'aughty smile:
"Why, no, sir, it's not the best;
There's a locket next me breast,
Pictur of a gel 'oo's eyes are blue.
That's the best I've done," says 'e.
"That's me darter, aged three. . . ."
"Blimy!" says I, "I've a nipper, too."

Straight I chucks my rifle to one side;
Shows 'im wiv a lovin' farther's pride
Me own little Mary Jane.
Proud 'e shows me 'is Elaine,
And we talks as friendly as can be;
Then I 'elps 'im on 'is way,
'Opes 'e's sife at 'ome to-day,
Wonders—'ow *would 'e 'ave treated me?*

TRI-COLOUR

Poppies, you try to tell me, glowing there
in the wheat;

Poppies! Ah no! You mock me: It's
blood, I tell you, it's blood.

It's gleaming wet in the grasses, it's glist'-
ning warm in the wheat;

It dabbles the ferns and the clover; it brims
in an angry flood;

It leaps to the startled heavens; it smothers
the sun; it cries

With scarlet voices of triumph from blos-
som and bough and blade.

See the bright horror of it! It's roaring out
of the skies,

And the whole red world is a-welter. . . .
O God! I'm afraid! I'm afraid!

Cornflowers, you say, just cornflowers, gem-
ming the golden grain;

Ah no! You can't deceive me. Can't I be-
lieve my eyes?

Look! It's the dead, my comrades, stark on
the dreadful plain,

TRI-COLOUR

All in their dark-blue blouses, staring up at
the skies.

Comrades of canteen laughter, dumb in the
yellow wheat.

See how they sprawl and huddle! See how
their brows are white!

Goaded on to the shambles, there in death
and defeat. . . .

Father of Pity, hide them! Hasten, O God,
Thy night!

Lilies (the light is waning), only lilies you
say,

Nestling and softly shining there where the
spear-grass waves.

No, my friend, I know better; brighter I see
than day:

It's the poor little wooden crosses over their
quiet graves.

Oh, how they're gleaming, gleaming! See!
Each cross has a crown.

Yes, it's true I am dying — little will be the
loss. . . .

Darkness . . . but look! In Heaven, a light,
and it's shining down. . . .

God's accolade! Lift me up, friends. I'm
going to win — *my Cross*.

A POT OF TEA

You make it in your mess-tin by the brazier's
 rosy gleam;
You watch it cloud, then settle amber clear;
You lift it with your bay'nit, and you sniff
 the fragrant steam;
The very breath of it is ripe with cheer.
You're awful cold and dirty, and a-cursing of
 your lot;
You scoff the blushin' 'alf of it, so rich and
 ripping 'ot;
It bucks you up like anythink, just seems
 to touch the spot:
God bless the man that first discovered
 Tea!

Since I came out to fight in France, which
 ain't the other day,
I think I've drunk enough to float a barge;
All kinds of fancy foreign dope, from caffy
 and doo lay,

A POT OF TEA

To rum they serves you out before a charge.
In back rooms of estaminays I've gurgled
pints of cham;

I've swilled down mugs of cider till I've felt
a bloomin' dam;

But 'struth! they all ain't in it with the vint-
age of Assam:

God bless the man that first invented Tea!

I think them lazy lumps o' gods wot kips on
asphodel

Swigs nectar that's a flavour of Oolong;

I only wish them sons o' guns a-grilling down
in 'ell

Could 'ave their daily ration of Suchong.

Hurrah! I'm off to battle, which is 'ell and
'eaven too;

And if I don't give some poor bloke a sex-
ton's job to do,

To-night, by Fritz's campfire, won't I 'ave a
gorgeous brew

(For fightin' mustn't interfere with Tea).

To-night we'll all be telling of the Boches
that we slew,

As we drink the giddy victory in Tea.

THE REVELATION

*The same old sprint in the morning, boys,
to the same old din and smut;
Chained all day to the same old desk, down
in the same old rut;
Posting the same old greasy books, catching
the same old train:
Oh, how will I manage to stick it all, if I ever
get back again?*

We've bidden good-bye to life in a cage,
we're finished with pushing a pen;
They're pumping us full of bellicose rage,
they're showing us how to be men.
We're only beginning to find ourselves; we're
wonders of brawn and thew;
But when we go back to our Sissy jobs —
oh, what are we going to do?

THE REVELATION

For shoulders curved with the counter stoop
will be carried erect and square ;
And faces white from the office light will
be bronzed by the open air ;
And we'll walk with the stride of a new-born
pride, with a new-found joy in our eyes,
Scornful men who have dived with death
under the naked skies.

And when we get back to the dreary grind,
and the bald-headed boss's call,
Don't you think that the dingy window-blind,
and the dingier office wall,
Will suddenly melt to a vision of space, of
violent, flame-scarred night ?
Then . . . oh the joy of the danger-thrill,
and oh, the roar of the fight !

Don't you think as we peddle a card of
pins the counter will fade away,
And again we'll be seeing the sand-bag rims,
and the barb-wire's misty grey ?

THE REVELATION

As a flat voice asks for a pound of tea, don't
you fancy we'll hear instead
The night-wind moan and the soothing drone
of the packet that's overhead?

Don't you guess that the things we're seeing
now will haunt us through all the years;
Heaven and hell rolled into one, glory and
blood and tears;
Life's pattern picked with a scarlet thread,
where once we wove with a grey,
To remind us all how we played our part in
the shock of an epic day?

Oh, we're booked for the Great Adventure
now, we're pledged to the Real Ro-
mance;
We'll find ourselves or we'll lose ourselves
somewhere in giddy old France;
We'll know the zest of the fighter's life; the
best that we have we'll give;
We'll hunger and thirst; we'll die . . . but
first — we'll live; by the Gods, we'll live!

THE REVELATION

We'll breathe the free air and we'll bivouac
under the starry sky;
We'll march with men, and we'll fight with
men, and we'll see men laugh and die;
We'll know such joy as we never dreamed;
we'll fathom the deeps of pain:
But the hardest bit of it all will be — when
we come back home again.

*For some of us smirk in a chiffon shop, and
some of us teach in a school;
Some of us help with the seat of our pants to
polish an office stool;
The merits of somebody's soap or jam some
of us seek to explain,
But all of us wonder what we'll do when we
have to go back again.*

GRAND-PÈRE

And so when he reached my bed
The General made a stand :
“ My brave young fellow,” he said,
“ I would shake your hand.”

So I lifted my arm, the right,
With never a hand at all ;
Only a stump, a sight
Fit to appal.

“ Well, well. Now that’s too bad !
That’s sorrowful luck,” he said ;
“ But there ! You give me, my lad,
The left instead.”

So from under the blanket’s rim
I raised and showed him the other,
A snag as ugly and grim
As its ugly brother.

GRAND-PÈRE

He looked at each jagged wrist;
He looked, but he did not speak;
And then he bent down and kissed
 Me on either cheek.

You wonder now I don't mind
I hadn't a hand to offer. . . .
They tell me (you know I'm blind)
 'Twas Grand-père Joffre.

SON

SON

He hurried away, young heart of joy, under
our Devon sky!

And I watched him go, my beautiful boy, and
a weary woman was I.

For my hair is grey, and his was gold; he'd
the best of his life to live,

And I'd loved him so, and I'm old, I'm old;
and he's all I had to give.

Ah yes, he was proud and swift and gay, but
oh how my eyes were dim!

With the sun in his heart he went away, but
he took the sun with him.

For look! How the leaves are falling now,
and the winter won't be long. . . .

Oh boy, my boy with the sunny brow, and
the lips of love and of song!

SON

How we used to sit at the day's sweet end,
we two by the firelight's gleam,
And we'd drift to the Valley of Let's Pre-
tend, on the beautiful river of Dream.
Oh dear little heart! All wealth untold
would I gladly, gladly pay
Could I just for a moment closely hold that
golden head to my grey.

For I gaze in the fire, and I'm seeing there
a child, and he waves to me;
And I run and I hold him up in the air, and
he laughs and shouts with glee;
A little bundle of love and mirth, crying:
"Come, Mumsie dear!"
Ah me! If he called from the ends of the
earth I know that my heart would hear.

* * * * *

Yet the thought comes thrilling through all
my pain: how worthier could he die?
Yea, a loss like that is a glorious gain, and
pitiful proud am I.

SON

For Peace must be bought with blood and
tears, and the boys of our hearts must
pay;

And so in our joy of the after-years, let us
bless them every day.

And though I know there's a hasty grave
with a poor little cross at its head,

And the gold of his youth he so gladly gave,
yet to me he'll never be dead.

And the sun in my Devon lane will be gay,
and my boy will be with me still,

So I'm finding the heart to smile and say:
"Oh God, if it be Thy Will!"

THE BLACK DUDEEN

*Humming it here in the dug-out,
Sucking me black dudeen,
I'd like to say in a general way,
There's nothing like Nickyteen;
There's nothing like Nickyteen, me boys,
Be it pipes or snipes or cigars;
So be sure that a bloke
Has plenty to smoke,
If you wants him to fight your wars.*

When I've eat my fill and my belt is snug,
I begin to think of my baccy plug.
I whittle a fill in my horny palm,
And the bowl of me old clay pipe I cram.
I trim the edges, I tamp it down,
I nurse a light with an anxious frown;
I begin to draw, and my cheeks tuck in,
And all my face is a blissful grin;
And up in a cloud the good smoke goes,
And the good pipe glimmers and fades and
glows;

THE BLACK DUDEEN

In its throat it chuckles a cheery song,
For I likes it hot and I likes it strong.
Oh, it's good is grub when you're feeling
 hollow,
But the best of a meal's the smoke to follow.

There was Micky and me on a night patrol,
Having to hide in a fizz-bang hole;
And sure I thought I was worse than dead
Wi' them crump-crumps hustlin' over me
 head.

Sure I thought 'twas the dirty spot,
Hammer and tongs till the air was hot.
And mind you, water up to your knees.
And cold! A monkey of brass would freeze.
And if we ventured our noses out
A "typewriter" clattered its pills about.
The Field of Glory! Well, I don't think!
I'd sooner be safe and snug in clink.

Then Micky, he goes and he cops one bad,
He always was having ill luck, poor lad.
Says he: "Old chummy, I'm booked right
 through;
Death and me 'as a wrongday voo.

THE BLACK DUDEEN

But . . . 'avn't you got a pinch of shag? —
I'd sell me perishin' soul for a fag."
And there he shivered and cussed his luck,
So I gave him me old black pipe to suck.
And he heaves a sigh, and he takes to it
Like a babby takes to his mammy's tit;
Like an infant takes to his mother's breast
Poor little Micky! he went to rest.

But the dawn was near, though the night was
black,

So I left him there and I started back.
And I laughed as the silly old bullets came,
For the bullet ain't made wot's got me name.
Yet some of 'em buzzed onhealthily near,
And one little blighter just chipped me ear.
But there! I got to the trench all right,
When sudden I jumped wi' a start o' fright,
And a word that doesn' look well in type:
I'd clean forgotten me old clay pipe.

So I had to do it all over again,
Crawling out on that filthy plain.
Through shells and bombs and bullets and
all —

Only this time — I do not crawl.

THE BLACK DUDEEN

I run like a man wot's missing a train,
Or a tom-cat caught in a plump of rain.
I hear the spit of a quick-fire gun
Tickle my heels, but I run, I run,
Through crash and crackle, and flicker and
flame,
(Oh, the packet ain't issued wot's got me
name!)

I run like a man that's no ideer
Of hunting around for a souveneer.
I run bang into a German chap,
And he stares like an owl, so I bash his map.
And just to show him that I'm his boss,
I gives him a kick on the parados.
And I marches him back with me all serene,
With, *tucked in me gub, me old dudeen.*

*Sitting here in the trenches
Me heart's a-splittin' with spleen,
For a parcel o' lead comes missing me head,
But it smashes me old dudeen.
God blast that red-headed sniper!
I'll give him something to snipe;
Before the war's through
Just see how I do
That blighter that smashed me pipe.*

THE LITTLE PIOU-PIOU *

Oh, some of us lolled in the château,
And some of us slinked in the slum;
But now we are here with a song and a cheer
To serve at the sign of the drum.
They put us in trousers of scarlet,
In big sloppy ulsters of blue;
In boots that are flat, a box of a hat,
And they call us the little piou-piou,
 Piou-piou,
The laughing and quaffing piou-piou;
The swinging and singing piou-piou;
And so with a rattle we march to the battle,
The weary but cheery piou-piou.

*Encore un petit verre de vin,
Pour nous mettre en route;
Encore un petit verre de vin
Pour nous mettre en train.*

* The French "Tommy."

THE LITTLE PIOUS-PIOU

They drive us head-on for the slaughter;
We haven't got much of a chance;
The issue looks bad, but we're awfully glad
To battle and die for La France.
For some must be killed, that is certain;
There's only one's duty to do;
So we leap to the fray in the glorious way
They expect of the little pious-piou.

En avant!

The way of the gallant pious-piou;
The dashing and smashing pious-piou;
The way grim and gory that leads us to glory
Is the way of the little pious-piou.

*Allons, enfants de la Patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé.*

To-day you would scarce recognise us,
Such veterans war-wise are we;
So grimy and hard, so calloused and scarred,
So "crummy," yet gay as can be.
We've finished with trousers of scarlet,
They're giving us breeches of blue,
With a helmet instead of a cap on our head,

THE LITTLE PIOUS-PIOU

Yet still we're the little piou-piou.

Nous les aurons!

The jesting, unresting piou-piou;

The cheering, unfearing piou-piou;

The keep-your-head-level and fight-like-the-devil;

The dying, defying piou-piou.

À la bayonette! Jusqu'à la mort!

Sonnez la charge, clairons!

BILL THE BOMBER

The poppies gleamed like bloody pools
through cotton-woolly mist ;
The Captain kept a-lookin' at the watch
upon his wrist ;
And there we smoked and squatted, as we
watched the shrapnel flame ;
'Twas wonnerful, I'm tellin' you, how fast
them bullets came.
'Twas weary work the waiting, though ; I
tried to sleep a wink,
For waitin' means a-thinkin', and it doesn't
do to think.
So I closed my eyes a little, and I had a
niceish dream
Of a-standin' by a dresser with a dish of
Devon cream ;
But I hadn't time to sample it, for sudden
like I woke :
"Come on, me lads !" the Captain says, 'n' I
climbed out through the smoke.

BILL THE BOMBER

We spread out in the open: it was like a
bath of lead;
But the boys they cheered and hollered fit to
raise the bloody dead,
Till a beastly bullet copped 'em, then they
lay without a sound,
And it's odd — we didn't seem to heed them
corpses on the ground.
And I kept on thinkin', thinkin' as the bullets
faster flew,
How they picks the werry best men, and they
lets the rotters through;
So indiscriminatin' like, they spares a man
of sin,
And a rare lad wots a husband and a father
gets done in.
And while havin' these reflections and ad-
vancin' on the run,
A bullet biffs me shoulder, and says I:
"That's number one."

Well, it downed me for a jiffy, but I didn't
lose me calm,
For I knew that I was needed: I'm a
bomber, so I am.

BILL THE BOMBER

I 'ad lost me cap and rifle, but I "carried
on" because
I 'ad me bombs and knew that they was
needed, so they was.
We didn't 'ave no singin' now, nor many
men to cheer;
Maybe the shrapnel drowned 'em, crashing
out so werry near;
And the Maxims got us sideways, and the
bullets faster flew,
And I copped one on me flipper, and says I:
"That's number two."

I was pleased it was the left one, for I 'ad
me bombs, ye see,
And 'twas 'ard if they'd be wasted like, and
all along o' me.
And I'd lost me 'at and rifle — but I told
you that before,
So I packed me mit inside me coat and "car-
ried on" once more.
But the rumpus it was wicked, and the men
were scarcer yet,

BILL THE BOMBER

And I felt me ginger goin', but me jaws I
 kindo set,
And we passed the Boche first trenches,
 which was 'eapin' 'igh with dead,
And we started for their second, which was
 fifty feet ahead;
When something like a 'ammer smashed me
 savage on the knee,
And down I came all muck and blood: Says
 I: "That's number three."

So there I lay all 'elpless like, and bloody sick
 at that,
And worryin' like anythink, because I'd lost
 me 'at;
And thinkin' of me missis, and the partin'
 words she said:
"If you gets killed, write quick, ol' man, and
 tell me as you're dead."
And lookin' at me bunch o' bombs — that was
 the 'ardest blow,
To think I'd never 'ave the chance to 'url
 them at the foe.

BILL THE BOMBER

And there was all our boys in front, a-fightin'
there like mad,
And me as could 'ave 'elped 'em wi' the lovely
bombs I 'ad.
And so I cussed and cussed, and then I
struggled back again,
Into that bit of battered trench, packed solid
with its slain.

Now as I lay a-lyin' there and blastin' of
me lot,
And wishin' I could just dispose of all them
bombs I'd got,
I sees within the doorway of a shy, retirin'
dug-out
Six Boches all a-grinnin', and their Captain
stuck 'is mug out;
And they 'ad a nice machine gun, and I
twigged what they was at;
And they fixed it on a tripod, and I watched
'em like a cat;
And they got it in position, and they seemed
so werry glad,

BILL THE BOMBER

Like they'd got us in a death-trap, which,
condemn their souls! they 'ad.
For there our boys was fightin' fifty yards in
front, and 'ere
This lousy bunch of Boches they 'ad got us
in the rear.

Oh it set me blood a-boilin' and I quite for-
got me pain,
So I started crawlin', crawlin' over all them
mounds of slain;
And them barstards was so busy-like they
'ad no eyes for me,
And me bleedin' leg was draggin', but me
right arm it was free. . . .
And now they 'ave it all in shape, and
swingin' sweet and clear;
And now they're all excited like, but — I am
drawin' near;
And now they 'ave it loaded up, and now
they're takin' aim. . . .
Rat-tat-tat-tat! Oh here, says I, is where
I join the game.

BILL THE BOMBER

And my right arm it goes swingin', and a
bomb it goes a-slingin',

And that "typewriter" goes wingin' in a
thunderbolt of flame.

Then these Boches, wot was left of them,
they tumbled down their 'ole,

And up I climbed a mound of dead, and
down on them I stole.

And oh that blessed moment when I heard
their frightened yell,

And I laughed down in that dug-out, ere I
bombed their souls to hell.

And now I'm in the hospital, surprised that
I'm alive;

We started out a thousand men, we came
back thirty-five.

And I'm minus of a trotter, but I'm most
amazin' gay,

For me bombs they wasn't wasted, though,
you might say, "thrown away."

THE WHISTLE OF SANDY MC GRAW

You may talk o' your lutes and your dulcimers fine,

Your harps and your tabors and cymbals
and a',

But here in the trenches jist gie me for mine
The wee penny whistle o' Sandy McGraw.

Oh it's: "Sandy, ma lad, will you lilt us
a tune?"

And Sandy is willin' and trillin' like mad;
Sae silvery sweet that we a' throng aroun',
And some o' it's gay, but the maist o' it's sad.
Jist the wee simple airs that sink intae your
hert,

And grup ye wi' love and wi' longin' for
hame;

And ye glour like an owl till you're feelin'
the stert

O' a tear, and you blink wi' a feelin' o' shame.

THE WHISTLE OF SANDY MC GRAW

For his song's o' the heather, and here in
the dirt
You listen and dream o' a land that's sae
braw,
And he mak's you forget a' the harm and the
hurt,
For he pipes like a laverock, does Sandy Mc-
'Graw.

* * * * *

At Eepers I mind me when rank upon rank
We rose from the trenches and swept like
the gale,
Till the rapid-fire guns got us fell on the
flank
And the murderin' bullets came swishin' like
hail:
Till a' that were left o' us faltered and broke;
Till it seemed for a moment a panicky rout,
When shrill through the fume and the flash
and the smoke
The wee valiant voice o' a whistle piped out.
The Campbells are Comin': Then into the
fray
We bounded wi' bayonets reekin' and raw,

THE WHISTLE OF SANDY MC GRAW

And oh we fair revelled in glory that day,
Jist thanks to the whistle o' Sandy McGraw.

* * * * *

At Loose, it wis after a sconnersome fecht,
On the field o' the slain I wis crawlin' aboot,
And the rockets were burnin' red holes in
the nicht.

And the guns they were veciously thunderin'
oot,

When sudden I heard a bit sound like a sigh,
And there in a crump-hole a kiltie I saw:

"Whit ails ye, ma lad? Are ye woundit?"
says I.

"I've lost ma wee whustle," says Sandy
McGraw.

"'Twas oot by yon bing where we pressed
the attack,

It drapped frae ma pooch, and between noo
and dawn

There isna much time so, I'm jist crawlin'
back. . . ."

"Ye're daft, man!" I telt him, but Sandy
wis gone.

THE WHISTLE OF SANDY MC GRAW

Weel, I waited a wee, then I crawled oot
masel,

And the big stuff wis gorin' and roarin'
around,

And I seemed tae be under the oxter o' hell,
And Creation wis crackin' tae bits by the
sound.

And I says in ma mind: "Gang ye back,
ye auld fule!"

When I thrilled tae a note that wis saucy
and sma';

And there in a crater, collected and cool,
Wi' his wee penny whistle wis Sandy Mc-
Graw.

Aye, there he wis playin' as gleg as could be,
And listenin' hard wis a spectacted Boche;
Then Sandy turned roon' and he noddit tae
me,

And he says: "Dinna blab on me, Sergeant
McTosh.

The auld chap is deein'. He likes me tae
play.

It's makin' him happy. Jist see his een
shine!"

And thrillin' and sweet in the hert o' the fray

THE WHISTLE OF SANDY MC GRAW

Wee Sandy wis playin' *The Watch on the Rhine*.

* * * * *

The last scene o' a' —'twas the day that we
took

That bit o' black ruin they ca' Labbiesell.

It seemed the hale hillside jist shivered and
shook,

And the red skies were roarin' and spewin'
oot shell.

And the Sergeants were cursin' tae keep us
in hand,

And hard on the leash we were strainin' like
dugs,

When upward we shot at the word o' com-
mand,

And the bullets were dingin' their songs in oor
lugs.

And onward we swept wi' a yell and a cheer,

And a' wis destruction, confusion and din,

And we knew that the trench o' the Boches
wis near,

And it seemed jist the safest bit hole tae be
in.

THE WHISTLE OF SANDY MC GRAW

So we a' tumbled doon, and the Boches were
there,

And they held up their hands, and they yelled:
"Kamarad!"

And I marched aff wi' ten, wi' their palms
in the air,

And my! I wis prood-like, and my! I wis
glad.

And I thocht: if ma lassie could see me jist
then. . . .

When sudden I sobered at somethin' I saw,
And I stopped and I stared, and I halted ma
men,

For there on a stretcher wis Sandy McGraw.

Weel, he looks in ma face, jist as game as ye
please:

"Ye ken hoo I hate tae be workin'," says he;

"But noo I can play in the street for baw-
bees,

Wi' baith o' ma legs taken aff at the knee."

And though I could see he wis rackit wi
pain,

He reached for his whistle and stertit tae
play,

THE WHISTLE OF SANDY MCGRAW

And quaverin' sweet wis the pensive refrain:
“*The floors o' the forest are a' wede away.*”

Then sudden he stoppit: “Man, wis it no
grand

Hoo we took a' they trenches?” . . . He
shakit his heid. . . .

“I'll — no — play — nae — mair ——” fee-
bly doon frae his hand

Slipped the wee penny whistle and . . .
Sandy wis deid.

* * * * *

And so you may talk o' your Steinways and
Strads,

Your wunnerful organs and brasses sae
braw;

But oot in the trenches jist gie me, ma lads,
Yon wee penny whistle o' Sandy McGraw.

THE STRETCHER-BEARER

My stretcher is one scarlet stain,
And as I tries to scrape it clean,
I tell you wot — I'm sick with pain
For all I've 'eard, for all I've seen;
Around me is the 'ellish night,
And as the war's red rim I trace,
I wonder if in 'eaven's height
Our God don't turn away 'Is Face.

I don't care 'ose the Crime may be;
I holds no brief fer kin or clan;
I 'ymns no 'ate: I only see
As man destroys his brother man;
I waves no flag; I only know,
As 'ere beside the dead I wait,
A million 'earts is weighed with woe,
A million 'omes is desolate.

In dripping darkness, far and near,
All night I've sought them woeful ones.
Dawn shudders up and still I 'ear

THE STRETCHER-BEARER

The crimson chorus of the guns.
Look! like a ball of blood the sun
'Angs o'er the scene of wrath and
 wrong. . . .
"Quick! Stretcher-bearers on the run!"
O Prince of Peace! 'Ow long, 'ow long?

WOUNDED

Is it not strange? A year ago to-day,
With scarce a thought beyond the hum-drum
 round,
I did my decent job and earned my pay;
Was averagely happy, I'll be bound.
Aye, in my little groove I was content,
Seeing my life run smoothly to the end,
With prosy days in stolid labour spent,
And jolly nights, a pipe, a glass, a friend.
In God's good time a hearth-fire's cosy gleam,
A wife and kids, and all a fellow needs;
When presto! like a bubble goes my dream:
I leap upon the Stage of Splendid Deeds.
I yell with rage; I wallow deep in gore:
I, that was clerk in a drysalter's store.

Stranger than any book I've ever read.
Here on the reeking battlefield I lie,
Under the stars, propped up with smeary
 dead,
Like too, if no one takes me in, to die.

WOUNDED

Hit on the arms, legs, liver, lungs and gall;
Damn glad there's nothing more of me to
hit;

But calm, and feeling never pain at all,
And full of wonder at the turn of it.
For of the dead around me three are mine,
Three foemen vanquished in the whirl of
fight;

So if I die I have no right to whine,
I feel I've done my little bit all right.
I don't know how — but there the beggars
are,

As dead as herrings pickled in a jar.

And here am I, worse wounded than I
thought;

For in the fight a bullet bee-like stings;
You never heed; the air is metal-hot,
And all alive with little flicking wings.

But on you charge. You see the fellows fall;
Your pal was by your side, fair fighting-mad;
You turn to him, and lo! no pal at all;
You wonder vaguely if he's copped it bad.
But on you charge. The heavens vomit
death;

WOUNDED

And vicious death is besoming the ground.
You're blind with sweat ; you're dazed, and
out of breath,

And though you yell, you cannot hear a
sound.

But on you charge. Oh, War's a rousing
game !

Around you smoky clouds like ogres tower ;
The earth is rowelled deep with spurs of
flame,

And on your helmet stones and ashes shower.

But on you charge. It's odd ! You have no
fear.

Machine-gun bullets whip and lash your path ;
Red, yellow, black the smoky giants rear ;
The shrapnel rips, the heavens roar in wrath.

But on you charge. Barbed wire all tram-
pled down ;

The ground all gored and rent as by a blast ;
Grim heaps of grey where once were heaps of
brown ;

A ragged ditch, the Hun first line at last.
All smashed to hell. Their second right
ahead,

WOUNDED

So on you charge. There's nothing else to do.

More reeking holes, blood, barbed wire, gruesome dead

(Your puttee strap's undone — that worries you).

You glare around. You think you're all alone.

But no; your chums come surging left and right.

The nearest chap flops down without a groan,
His face still snarling with the rage of fight.
Ha! here's the second trench — just like the first,

Only a little more so, more "laid out";
More pounded, flame-corroded, death-accurst;

A pretty piece of work, beyond a doubt.
Now for the third, and there your job is done,
So on you charge. You never stop to think.
Your cursed puttee's trailing as you run;
You feel you'd sell your soul to have a drink.
The acrid air is full of cracking whips.
You wonder how it is you're going still.

WOUNDED

You foam with rage. O God! to be at
grips

With someone you can rush and crush and
kill.

Your sleeve is dripping blood; you're seeing
red;

You're battle-mad; your turn is coming
now.

See! there's the jagged barbed wire straight
ahead,

And there's the trench — you'll get there any-
how.

Your puttee catches on a strand of wire,
And down you go; perhaps it saves your
life,

For over sandbag rims you see 'em fire,
Crop-headed chaps, their eyes ablaze with
strife.

You crawl, you cower; then once again you
plunge

With all your comrades roaring at your
heels.

Have at 'em, lads! You stab, you jab, you
lunge;

A blaze of glory, then the red world reels.

WOUNDED

A crash of triumph, then . . . you're faint a
bit . . .

That cursed puttee! Now to fasten it. . . .

Well, that's the charge. And now I'm here
alone.

I've built a little wall of Hun on Hun,
To shield me from the leaden bees that drone
(It saves me worry, and it hurts 'em none).

The only thing I'm wondering is when
Some stretcher-men will stroll along my way?

It isn't much that's left of me, but then
Where life is, hope is, so at least they say.

Well, if I'm spared I'll be the happy lad.

I tell you I won't envy any king.

I've stood the racket, and I'm proud and
glad;

I've had my crowning hour. Oh, War's the
thing!

It gives us common, working chaps our
chance,

A taste of glory, chivalry, romance.

Aye, War, they say, is hell; it's heaven, too.
It lets a man discover what he's worth.

WOUNDED

It takes his measure, shows what he can do,
Gives him a joy like nothing else on earth.
It fans in him a flame that otherwise
Would flicker out, these drab, discordant
days;

It teaches him in pain and sacrifice
Faith, fortitude, grim courage past all praise.
Yes, War is good. So here beside my slain,
A happy wreck I wait amid the din;
For even if I perish mine's the gain. . . .
Hi there, you fellows! *Won't* you take me
in?

Give me a fag to smoke upon the way. . . .
We've taken La Boisselle! The hell, you say!
Well, that would make a corpse sit up and
grin.

Lead on! I'll live to fight another day.

--

FAITH

Since all that is was ever bound to be ;
Since grim, eternal laws our Being bind ;
And both the riddle and the answer find,
And both the carnage and the calm decree ;
Since plain within the Book of Destiny
Is written all the journey of mankind
Inexorably to the end ; since blind
And mortal puppets playing parts are we :

Then let's have faith ; good cometh out of ill ;
The power that shaped the strife shall end the
 strife ;
Then let's bow down before the Unknown
 Will ;
Fight on, believing all is well with life ;
Seeing within the worst of War's red rage
The gleam, the glory of the Golden Age.

THE COWARD

'Ave you seen Bill's mug in the Noos to-day?
'E's gyned the Victoriar Cross, they say;
Little Bill wot would grizzle and run away,
 If you 'it 'im a swipe on the jawr.
'E's slaughtered the Kaiser's men in tons;
'E's captured one of their quick-fire guns,
And 'e 'adn't no practice in killin' 'Uns
 Afore 'e went off to the war.

Little Bill wot I nussed in 'is hyby clothes;
Little Bill wot told me 'is childish woes;
'Ow often I've tidied 'is pore little nose
 Wiv the 'em of me pinnyfore.
And now all the papers 'is praises ring,
And 'e's been and 'e's shaken the 'and of the
 King
And I sawr 'im to-day in the ward, pore
 thing,
 Where they're patching 'im up once more.
And 'e says: "Wot d'ye think of it, Lizer
 Ann?"

THE COWARD

And I says: "Well, I can't make it out, old
man;

You'd 'ook it as soon as a scrap began,
When you was a bit of a kid."

And 'e whispers: "'Ere, on the quiet, Liz,
They're makin' too much of the 'ole damn biz,
And the papers is printin' me ugly phiz,
Put . . . I'm 'anged if I know wot I did.

"Oh, the Captain comes and 'e says: 'Look
'ere!

They're far too quiet out there: it's queer.
They're up to somethin'—'oo'll volunteer
To crawl in the dark and see?'

Then I felt me 'eart like a 'ammer go,
And up jumps a chap and 'e says: 'Right O!'
But I chips in straight, and I says 'Oh no!
'E's a missis and kids — take me.'

"And the next I knew I was sneakin' out,
And the oozy corpses was all about,
And I felt so scared I wanted to shout,
And me skin fair prickled wiv fear;
And I sez: 'You coward! You 'ad no right
To take on the job of a man this night,'

THE COWARD

Yet still I went creepin' till ('orrid sight!)
The trench of the 'Uns was near.

"It was all so dark, it was all so still;
Yet somethin' pushed me against me will;
'Ow I wanted to turn! Yet I crawled until
I was seein' a dim light shine.
Then thinks I: 'I'll just go a little bit,
And see wot the doose I can make of it,'
And it seemed to come from the mouth of a
pit:

'Christmas!' sez I, 'a *mine*.'

"Then 'ere's the part wot I can't explain:
I wanted to make for 'ome again,
But somethin' was blazin' inside me brain,
So I crawled to the trench instead;
Then I saw the bullet 'ead of a 'Un,
And 'e stood by a rapid-firer gun,
And I lifted a rock and I 'it 'im one,
And 'e dropped like a chunk o' lead.

"Then all the 'Uns that was underground,
Comes up with a rush and on with a bound,
And I swings that giddy old Maxim round
And belts 'em solid and square.

THE COWARD

You see I was off me chump wiv fear:
'If I'm sellin' me life,' sez I, 'it's dear.'
And the trench was narrow and they was
near,
So I peppered the brutes for fair.

"So I 'eld 'em back and I yelled with fright,
And the boys attacked and we 'ad a fight,
And we 'captured a section o' trench' that
night
Which we didn't expect to get;
And they found me there with me Maxim
gun,
And I'd laid out a score if I'd laid out one,
And I fainted away when the thing was done,
And I 'aven't got over it yet."

So that's the 'istory Bill told me.
Of course it's all on the strict Q.T.;
It wouldn't do to get out, you see,
As 'e hacted against 'is will.
But 'e's convalescin' wiv all 'is might,
And 'e 'opes to be fit for another fight —
Say! Ain't 'e a bit of the real all right?
Wot's the matter with Bill!

MISSIS MORIARTY'S BOY

Missis Moriarty called last week, and says
she to me, says she:

“Sure the heart of me's broken entirely
now — it's the fortunate woman you are;
You've still got your Dinnisto cheer up your
home, but me Patsy boy where is he?

Lyin' alone, cold as a stone, kilt in the wear-
ful wahr.

Oh, I'm seein' him now as I looked on him
last, wid his hair all curly and bright,
And the wonderful, tenderful heart he had,
and his eyes as he wint away,
Shinin' and lookin' down on me from the
pride of his proper height:

Sure I'll remember me boy like that if I live
till me dyin' day.”

And just as she spoke these very same words
me Dinnis came in at the door,
Came in from McGonigle's ould shebeen,
came in from drinkin' his pay;

MISSIS MORIARTY'S BOY

And Missis Moriarty looked at him, and she
 didn't say anny more,
But she wrapped her head in her ould black
 shawl, and she quietly wint away.
And what was I thinkin'; I ask ye now, as I
 put me Dinnis to bed,
Wid him ravin' and cursin' one half o' the
 night, as cold by his side I sat;
Was I thinkin' the poor ould woman she
 was wid her Patsy slaughtered and
 dead?
Was I weepin' for Missis Moriarty? I'm not
 so sure about that.

Missis Moriarty goes about wid a shinin' look
 on her face;
Wid her grey hair under her ould black
 shawl, and the eyes of her mother-mild;
Some say she's a little bit off her head; but
 annyway it's the case
Her temper's so swate that you nivver
 would tell she'd be losin' her only
 child.

MISSIS MORIARTY'S BOY

And I think, as I wait up ivery night for me
Dinnis to come home blind,
And I'm hearin' his stumblin' foot on the
stair along about half-past three:
Sure, there's many a way of breakin' a heart,
and I haven't made up me mind —
Would I be Missis Moriarty, or Missis Mo-
riarty me?

MY FOE

A Belgian Priest-Soldier Speaks:—

Gurr! You cochon! Stand and fight!
Show your mettle! Snarl and bite!
Spawn of an accursed race,
Turn and meet me face to face!
Here amid the wreck and rout
Let us grip and have it out!
Here where ruins rock and reel
Let us settle, steel to steel.
Look! Our houses, how they spit
Sparks from brands your friends have lit.
See! Our gutters running red,
Bright with blood your friends have shed.
Hark! Amid your drunken brawl
How our maidens shriek and call.
Why have you come here alone,
To this hearth's blood-spattered stone?
Come to ravish, come to loot,
Come to play the ghoulish brute.

MY FOE

Ah, indeed! We well are met,
Bayonet to bayonet.
God! I never killed a man:
Now I'll do the best I can.
Rip you to the evil heart,
Laugh to see the life-blood start.
Bah! You swine! I hate you so.
Show you mercy? No! . . . and no! . . .

There! I've done it. See! He lies
Death a-staring from his eyes;
Glazing eyeballs, panting breath,
How it's horrible, is Death!
Plucking at his bloody lips
With his trembling finger-tips:
Choking in a dreadful way
As if he would something say
In that uncouth tongue of his. . . .
Oh, how horrible Death is!

How I wish that he would die!
So unnerved, unmanned am I.
See! His twitching face is white!
See! His bubbling blood is bright.

MY FOE

Why do I not shout with glee?
What strange spell is over me?
There he lies; the fight was fair;
Let me toss my cap in air.
Why am I so silent? Why
Do I pray for him to die?
Where is all my vengeful joy?
Ugh! *My foe is but a boy.*

I'd a brother of his age
Perished in the war's red rage;
Perished in the Ypres hell;
Oh, I loved my brother well.
And though I be hard and grim,
How it makes me think of him!
He had just such flaxen hair
As the lad that's lying there.
Just such frank blue eyes were his. . . .
God! How horrible war is!

I have reason to be gay:
There is one less foe to slay.
I have reason to be glad:
Yet — my foe is such a lad.

MY FOE

So I watch in dull amaze,
See his dying eyes a-glaze,
See his face grow glorified,
See his hands outstretched and wide
To that bit of ruined wall
Where the flames have ceased to crawl,
Where amid the crumbling bricks
Hangs a *blackened crucifix*.

Now, oh now I understand.
Quick I press it in his hand,
Close his feeble finger-tips,
Hold it to his faltering lips.
As I watch his welling blood
I would stem it if I could.
God of Pity, let him live!
God of Love, forgive, forgive.

* * * * *

His face looked strangely, as he died,
Like that of One they crucified.
And in the pocket of his coat
I found a letter; thus he wrote:
*The things I've seen! Oh mother, dear,
I'm wondering can God be here?*

*To-night amid the drunken brawl
I saw a Cross hung on a wall;
I'll seek it out, and there alone
Perhaps I may atone, atone. . . .*

Ah no! 'Tis I who must atone.
No other saw but God alone;
Yet how can I forget the sight
Of that face so woeful white?
Dead I kissed him as he lay,
Knelt by him and tried to pray;
Left him lying there at rest,
Crucifix upon his breast.

Not for him the pity be.
Ye who pity, pity me,
Crawling now the ways I trod,
Blood-guilty in sight of God.

MY JOB

I've got a little job on 'and, the time is drawin'
nigh;

At seven by the Captain's watch I'm due to
go and do it;

I wants to 'ave it nice and neat, and pleasin'
to the eye,

And I 'opes the God of soldier men 'll see me
safely through it.

Because, you see, it's somethin' I 'ave never
done before;

And till you 'as experience noo stunts is
always tryin';

The chances is I'll never 'ave to do it any
more:

At seven by the Captain's watch my little job
is . . . *dyin'*.

I've got a little note to write; I'd best begin
it now.

I ain't much good at writin' notes, but here
goes: "Dearest Mother,

MY JOB

I've been in many 'ot old ' do's ' ; I've scraped
through safe some'ow,

But now I'm on the very point of tacklin'
another.

A little job of hand-grenades ; they called for
volunteers.

They picked me out ; I'm proud of it ; it
seems a trifle dicky.

If anythin' should 'appen, well, there ain't
no call for tears,

And so . . . I 'opes this finds you well, Your
werry lovin' Micky."

I've got a little score to settle wiv them swine,
out there.

I've 'ad so many of me pals done in it's quite
upset me.

I've seen so much of bloody death I don't
seem for to care,

If I can only even up, how soon the blighters
get me.

I'm sorry for them perishers that corpses in
a bed ;

I only 'opes mine's short and sweet, no linger-
longer-lyin' ;

MY JOB

I've made a mess of life, but now I'll try to
make instead . . .

It's seven sharp. Good-bye, old pals! . . .
a decent job in dyin'.

THE SONG OF THE PACIFIST

What do they matter, our headlong hates,
when we take the toll of our Dead?

Think ye our glory and gain will pay for the
torrent of blood we have shed?

By the cheers of our Victory will the heart
of the mother be comforted?

If by the Victory all we mean is a broken and
brooding foe;

Is the pomp and power of a glitt'ring hour,
and a truce for an age or so:

By the clay-cold hand on the broken blade we
have smitten a bootless blow!

If by the Triumph we only prove that the
sword we sheathe is bright;

That justice and truth and love endure; that
freedom's throned on the height;

THE SONG OF THE PACIFIST

That the feeble folk shall be unafraid; that
Might shall never be Right;

If this be all: by the blood-drenched plains,
by the havoc of fire and fear,
By the rending roar of the War of Wars, by
the Dead so doubly dear, . . .

Then our Victory is a vast defeat, and it
mocks us as we cheer.

Victory! there can be but one, hallowed in
every land:

When by the graves of our common dead we
who were foemen stand;

And in the hush of our common grief hand
is tendered to hand.

Triumph! Yes, when out of the dust in the
splendour of their release

The spirits of those who fell go forth and
they hallow our hearts to peace,

And, brothers in pain, with world-wide voice,
we clamour that War shall cease.

THE SONG OF THE PACIFIST

Glory! Aye, when from blackest loss shall
be born most radiant gain;

When over the gory fields shall rise a star
that never shall wane:

Then, and then only, our Dead shall know
that they have not fall'n in vain.

When our children's children shall talk of
War as a madness that may not be;

When we thank our God for our grief to-day,
and blazon from sea to sea

In the name of the Dead the banner of Peace
. . . *that will be Victory.*

THE TWINS

There were two brothers, John and James,
And when the town went up in flames,
To save the house of James dashed John,
Then turned, and lo! his own was gone.

And when the great World War began,
To volunteer John promptly ran;
And while he learned live bombs to lob,
James stayed at home and — sneaked his job.

John came home with a missing limb;
That didn't seem to worry him;
But oh, it set his brain awirl
To find that James had — sneaked his girl!

Time passed. John tried his grief to drown;
To-day James owns one-half the town;
His army contracts riches yield;
And John? Well, *search the Potter's Field.*

THE SONG OF THE SOLDIER-BORN

*Give me the scorn of the stars and a peak
defiant;*

*Wail of the pines and a wind with the shout
of a giant;*

*Night and a trail unknown and a heart re-
liant.*

Give me to live and love in the old, bold
fashion;

A soldier's billet at night, and a soldier's ra-
tion;

A heart that leaps to the fight with a soldier's
passion.

For I hold as a simple faith there's no deny-
ing:

The trade of a soldier's the only trade worth
plying;

THE SONG OF THE SOLDIER-BORN

The death of a soldier's the only death worth
dying.

So let me go and leave you safely behind
me;

Go to the spaces of hazard where nothing
shall bind me;

Go till the word is War — and then you will
find me.

Then you will call me and claim me because
you will need me;

Cheer me and gird me and into the battle-
wrath speed me. . . .

And when it's over, spurn me and no longer
heed me.

For guile and a purse gold-greased are the
arms you carry;

With deeds of paper you fight and with pens
you parry;

You call on the hounds of the law your foes
to harry.

THE SONG OF THE SOLDIER-BORN

You with your "Art for its own sake," posing and prinking;
You with your "Live and be merry," eating and drinking;
You with your "Peace at all hazard," from bright blood shrinking.

Fools! I will tell you now: though the red rain patters,
And a million of men go down, it's little it matters. . . .
There's the Flag upflung to the stars, though it streams in tatters.

There's a glory gold never can buy to yearn and to cry for;
There's a hope that's as old as the sky to suffer and sigh for;
There's a faith that out-dazzles the sun to martyr and die for.

Ah no! it's my dream that War will never be ended;

THE SONG OF THE SOLDIER-BORN

That men will perish like men, and valour be
splendid;

That the Flag by the sword will be served,
and honour defended.

That the tale of my fights will never be an-
cient story;

That though my eye may be dim and my
beard be hoary,

I'll die as a soldier dies on the Field of
Glory.

*So give me a strong right arm for a wrong's
swift righting;*

*Stave of a song on my lips as my sword is
smiting;*

*Death in my boots may-be, but fighting,
fighting.*

AFTERNOON TEA

AFTERNOON TEA

As I was saying . . . (No, thank you; I
never take cream with my tea;

Cows weren't allowed in the trenches — got
out of the habit, y'see.)

As I was saying, our Colonel leaped up like
a youngster of ten:

"Come on, lads!" he shouts, "and we'll
show 'em." And he sprang to the head
of the men.

Then some bally thing seemed to trip him, and
he fell on his face with a slam. . . .

Oh, he died like a true British soldier, and the
last word he uttered was "Damn!"

And hang it! I loved the old fellow, and
something just burst in my brain,

And I cared no more for the bullets than I
would for a shower of rain.

'Twas an awf'ly funny sensation (I say, this
is jolly nice tea);

I felt as if something had broken; by gad!
I was suddenly free.

AFTERNOON TEA

Free for a glorified moment, beyond regulations and laws,
Free just to wallow in slaughter, as the chap
of the Stone Age was.
So on I went joyously nursing a Berserker
rage of my own,
And though all my chaps were behind me,
feeling most frightf'ly alone;
With the bullets and shells ding-donging, and
the "krock" and the swish of the shrap;
And I found myself humming "Ben Bolt"
. . . (Will you pass me the sugar, old
chap?
Two lumps, please). . . . What was I say-
ing? Oh yes, the jolly old dash;
We simply ripped through the barrage, and
on with a roar and a crash.
My fellows, Old Nick couldn't stop 'em. On,
on they went with a yell,
Till they tripped on the Boches' sandbags —
nothing much left to tell:
A trench so tattered and battered that even
a rat couldn't live;
Some corpses tangled and mangled, wire you
could pass through a sieve.

AFTERNOON TEA

The jolly old guns had bilked us, cheated us
out of our show,
And my fellows were simply yearning for a
red mix-up with the foe.
So I shouted to them to follow, and on we
went roaring again,
Battle-tuned and exultant, on in the leaden
rain.
Then all at once a machine gun barks from a
bit of a bank,
And our Major roars in a fury: "We've got
to take it on flank."
He was running like fire to lead us, when
down like a stone he comes,
As full of "typewriter" bullets as a pudding
is full of plums.
So I took his job and we got 'em. . . . By
gad! we got 'em like rats;
Down in a deep shell crater we fought like
Kilkenny cats.
'Twas pleasant just for a moment to be shel-
tered and out of range,
With someone you *saw* to go for — it made
an agreeable change.

AFTERNOON TEA

And the Boches that missed my bullets, my
chaps gave a bayonet jolt,
And all the time, I remember, I whistled and
hummed "Ben Bolt."

Well, that little job was over, so hell-for-
leather we ran,
On to the second line trenches — that's where
the fun began.

For though we had strafed 'em like fury,
there still were some Boches about,
And my fellows, teeth set and eyes glaring,
like terriers routed 'em out.

Then I stumbled on one of their dug-outs, and
I shouted: "Is anyone there?"

And a voice, "Yes, one; but I'm wounded,"
came faint up the narrow stair;

And my man was descending before me, when
sudden a cry! a shot!

(I say, this cake is delicious. You make it
yourself, do you not?)

My man? Oh, they killed the poor devil; for
if there was one there was ten;

So after I'd bombed 'em sufficient I went
down at the head of my men;

AFTERNOON TEA

And four tried to sneak from a bunk-hole,
but we cornered the rotters all right;
I'd rather not go into details, 'twas messy that
bit of the fight.
But all of it's beastly messy; let's talk of
pleasanter things;
The skirts that the girls are wearing, ridicu-
lous fluffy things,
So short that they show. . . . Oh, hang it!
Well, if I must, I must.
We cleaned out the second trench line, bomb
and bayonet thrust;
And on we went to the third one, quite cal-
loused to crumping by now;
And some of our fellows who'd passed us
were making a deuce of a row;
And my chaps—well, I just couldn't hold
'em. (It's strange how it is with gore;
In some ways it's just like whisky: if you
taste it you must have more.)
Their eyes were like beacons of battle; by
gad, sir! they *couldn't* be calmed,
So I headed them bang for the bomb-belt, rac-
ing like billy-be-damned.

AFTERNOON TEA

Oh, it didn't take long to arrive there, those
who arrived at all;
The machine guns were certainly chronic,
the shindy enough to appal.
Oh yes, I omitted to tell you, I'd wounds on
the chest and the head,
And my shirt was torn to a gun-rag, and my
face blood-gummy and red.
I'm thinking I looked like a madman; I fancy
I felt one too,
Half naked and swinging a rifle. . . . God!
what a glorious "do."
As I sit here in old Piccadilly, sipping my
afternoon tea,
I see a blind, bullet-chipped devil, and it's
hard to believe that it's me;
I see a wild, war-damaged demon, smash-
ing out left and right,
And humming "Ben Bolt" rather loudly,
and hugely enjoying the fight.
And as for my men, may God bless 'em!
I've loved 'em ever since then:
They fought like the shining angels; they're
the pick o' the land, my men.

AFTERNOON TEA

And the trench was a reeking shambles, not
a Boche to be seen alive —
So I thought; but on rounding a traverse
I came on a covey of five;
And four of 'em threw up their flippers, but
the fifth chap, a sergeant, was game,
And though I'd a bomb and revolver he came
at me just the same.
A sporty thing that, I tell you; I just couldn't
blow him to hell,
So I swung to the point of his jaw-bone, and
down like a ninepin he fell.
And then when I'd brought him to reason,
he wasn't half bad, that Hun;
He bandaged my head and my short-rib as
well as the Doc could have done.
So I went back with my Boches, as gay as a
two-year-old colt,
And it suddenly struck me as rummy, I
still was a-humming "Ben Bolt."
And now, by Jove! how I've bored you.
You've just let me babble away;
Let's talk of the things that *matter* — your
car or the newest play. . . .

THE MOURNERS

I look into the aching womb of night ;
I look across the mist that masks the dead ;
The moon is tired and gives but little light,
The stars have gone to bed.

The earth is sick and seems to breathe with
pain ;
A lost wind whimpers in a mangled tree ;
I do not see the foul, corpse-cluttered plain,
The dead I do not see.

The slain I *would* not see . . . and so I lift
My eyes from out the shambles where they
lie ;
When lo ! a million woman-faces drift
Like pale leaves through the sky.

The cheeks of some are channelled deep with
tears ;

THE MOURNERS

But some are tearless, with wild eyes that
 stare
Into the shadow of the coming years
 Of fathomless despair.

And some are young, and some are very old;
And some are rich, some poor beyond belief;
Yet all are strangely like, set in the mould
 Of everlasting grief.

They fill the vast of Heaven, face on face;
And then I see one weeping with the rest,
Whose eyes beseech me for a moment's
 space. . . .

Oh eyes I love the best!

Nay, I but dream. The sky is all forlorn,
And there's the plain of battle writhing red:
God pity them, the women-folk who mourn!
 How happy are the dead!

L'ENVOI

*My job is done; my rhymes are ranked and
ready,*

*My word-battalions marching verse by verse;
Here stanza-companies are none too steady;
There print-platoons are weak, but might be
worse.*

*And as in marshalled order I review them,
My type-brigades, unfearful of the fray,
My eyes that seek their faults are seeing
through them*

Immortal visions of an epic day.

*It seems I'm in a giant bowling-alley;
The hidden heavies round me crash and
thud;*

*A spire snaps like a pipe-stem in the valley;
The rising sun is like a ball of blood.*

*Along the road the fantassins are pouring,
And some are gay as fire, and some steel-
stern. . . .*

L'ENVOI

*Then back again I see the red tide pouring,
Along the reeking road from Hebuterne.*

*And once again I seek Hill Sixty-Seven,
The Hun lines grey and peaceful in my sight;
When suddenly the rosy air is riven —
A "coal-box" blots the "boyau" on my right.
Or else to evil Carnoy I am stealing,
Past sentinels who hail with bated breath;
Where not a cigarette spark's dim revealing
May hint our mission in that zone of death.*

*I see across the shrapnel-seeded meadows
The jagged rubble-heap of La Boisselle;
Blood-guilty Fricourt brooding in the shadows,
And Thiepval's château empty as a shell.
Down Albert's riven streets the moon is leering;
The Hanging Virgin takes its bitter ray;
And all the road from Hamel I am hearing
The silver rage of bugles over Bray.*

L'ENVOI

*Once more within the sky's deep sapphire
hollow*

*I sight a swimming Taube, a fairy thing;
I watch the angry shell flame flash and follow
In feather puffs that flick a tilted wing;
And then it fades, with shrapnel mirror's
flashing;*

*The flashes bloom to blossoms lily gold;
The batteries are rancorously crashing,
And life is just as full as it can hold.*

*Oh spacious days of glory and of grieving!
Oh sounding hours of lustre and of loss!
Let us be glad we lived you, still believing
The God who gave the cannon gave the Cross.
Let us be sure amid these seething passions,
The lusts of blood and hate our souls ab-
hor:*

*The Power that Order out of Chaos fashions
Smites fiercest in the wrath-red forge of
War. . . .*

*Have faith! Fight on! Amid the battle-hell
Love triumphs, Freedom beacons, all is well.*



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